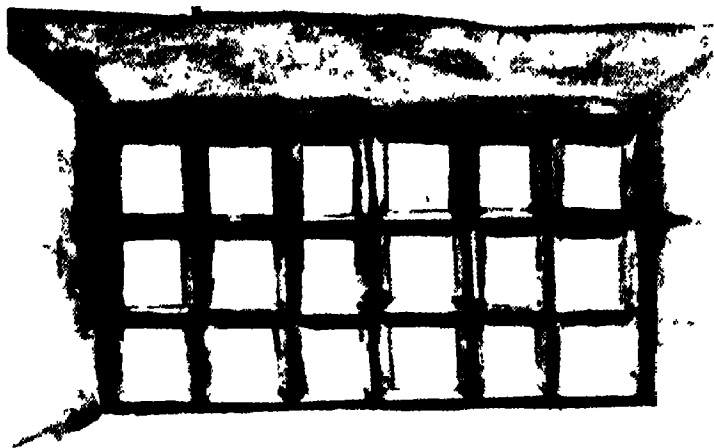




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## **PENAL DISCIPLINE**



A Prisoner at work

[front.]

# PENAL DISCIPLINE

BY

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To  
B. M.  
K. D.  
M. S.

and all other prisoners and captives.  
this book



## PREFACE

This book is not an autobiography. But I am a sufficiently obscure individual to be obliged to explain to my readers how, and why, I come to be writing it.

Although I was once an official, this book is entirely unofficial. It is about things which, when I was at work, I had the opportunity of observing, and which my medical training enabled me to study farther in the light of modern teaching on the make-up of the human being.

I have written nothing of my official work. People who feel curious about departmental doings, or on any other matters on which it would not be for me to comment, need not look here.

My personal experiences appear only in so far as they are explanatory of my theme. I have drawn a few life-pictures to give colour to what might be a less attractive book without them. I have, of course, used no real name or initials, nor description that could ever be recognised.

My allusions to existing conditions in prisons are very few, and only such as the public may gather for itself from official reports, prison rules, or other public papers.

I may remind my readers that the Prison System, with its principle of penal discipline, was not made by the administrative body. It is not always realised that the prison system was made by the people of this country, and that, if anything

is amiss with it, we citizens and voters are accountable, not those who bear the burden of putting our laws into operation. This is also true of punishment at the hands of the law.

An offender is sent to prison by the judge or magistrate that he may undergo penal discipline, which, with loss of liberty, is his punishment. Once in prison, if he attempts to do his own will, to offend against the prescribed order, to disobey, resist, or assault his gaolers, he can be punished again by the Governor or the Justices. He can be coerced or punished in various ways, by forfeiture of remission, loss of privilege, by dietary deprivations, by separate or close confinement. His body may be restrained, day and night, in irons, or tied up and flogged. He can be forcibly fed, according to what he can endure (a treatment called medical, but in reality disciplinary), in order to prevent his determining his imprisonment.

In short, we are not afraid to hurt, or injure, or cause him to run risks, in order to master him. So much does the idea of punishment stand in the forefront of our minds, that it is difficult for us to think of a criminal without thinking of his recompense. We are afraid of him, as some of us are of wasps. It is as hard for society as for the individual not to believe, when it has suffered injury, that its first duty is retaliation. It is possible that we, in our desire to punish, have got as badly on the nerves of our habitual criminals, as they, by ignoring our punishments and repeating their offences, have got on ours. There are times, I know, when I, too, (*mea culpa*) desire, in my wrath, to punish, when I should be thinking how to cure the sick man or woman before me.

In my earlier chapters I try to show, by the aid of illustrations and figures, what manner of woman (not *type of criminal*) the prison system has to work upon, and how it proceeds to work upon her from the time she is a young girl, until the time when she is an old woman. I look at its effect upon her and at her attitude towards it, and at the results. It is hardly possible to show these, in full, in the first half of this book, for life in a local prison, even under much the same penal discipline, bears no comparison to life in a Borstal Institution or Convict Prison. In any of our lives the difference between three days, three months, and three years is not to be measured in time only.

Although I write in detail of women prisoners, whom I knew the best, in all general matters what I say applies to men and women alike. In particular anything I say as to hysteria, or prison or degenerative psychoses in girls or women, applies equally to men and boys.

My language is unofficial in one respect. I do not employ the biological terms "male" and "female" to distinguish men and women. This use is very old-fashioned, and liable to be misunderstood in other countries. *Homo sapiens* is something much more than male or female, and I have called the persons to whom we apply penal discipline men and women.

During my service I found nothing in the prison system to interest me, except as a gigantic irrelevance—a social curiosity. If the system had a good effect on any prisoner, I failed to mark it. I have no shadow of doubt of its power to demoralise, or of its cruelty. It appears to me not to belong to this time or civilisation at all.

My main argument here is that we not only do not deter, but that we do actually make-over our criminal to crime. The fallacy of applying force to a being who is inherently insusceptible of being managed by force, lies in the fact that the proceeding ends, not in the alteration of the prisoner's point of view, but in his spiritually triumphing over us, and bringing the strong arm of the law to naught. We merely ill-treat a man or woman who still ignores and escapes us.

The time is ripe for us to convince ourselves of this. We should turn a fresh leaf in our treatment of the offender, fortified not by precedent, or by age-long prejudice, but by the findings of science which is, at last, in the act of discovering the mechanism of the whole man. We know enough already about how he "works" to be able to consider when, under stress, he falls, what to be at in the matter of restoring him. We should act on what we know. When we have abandoned penal discipline we must not let ourselves be dismayed by the size of our scrap-heap, or the cost of our new road, but take up the problem anew, and get on with solving it.

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## CHAPTER I

### THE INSPECTOR'S APOLOGIA

When, in my early twenties, I began to study medicine, half of my friends and relations wanted to know what my motives were. The other half undertook to inform me, and from this half I learnt that they were rooted in sheer lunacy. Over a period of several years they did not fail to set the facts before me, for which I was duly, and remain—grateful. I think my friends, perhaps, had a little thrill out of my doings for themselves to repay the interest they took in me. They reminded me that I had finished with schoolrooms. A life of ease lay before me. They said I loved books—goodness knew I was always reading them—well—the books of the world were mine. I adored horses and dogs, and when they all wanted exercise why didn't I take them out? I had no cares nor responsibilities, and could amuse or interest myself in ways of my own choosing. Yet, what did I do? I frequented stuffy lecture rooms, laboratories and dissecting rooms, and let myself be harried through the dreadful medical curriculum by demonstrators, lecturers, tutors, examiners. I was either enduring the smells and risking the poisons of hospitals, post-mortem rooms, or

London in August, or I was wandering about the slums on winter nights on the business of bringing small citizens into their peculiarly profitless existence. All this and much more, was my revolting choice. It was sometimes suggested that sentimentality, or frustrated love-longings had driven me to this life. Even as the nun retreated to the cloister to endure everything that was disagreeable, so was I retreating to a life to be spent in prescribing salts and senna for the sick.

I explained that I was not choosing my line of study in order to practise on the sick, but rather as a means to the practice of that fine art, the pursuit of life. The study of medicine appeared to offer me concentrated supplies of knowledge useful to that end.

"But," they said, "you will sacrifice six of the best years of your life—years of such hard work. You won't make up for that loss."

I said, "You surely don't suppose I am going to stop living while I work? Besides, what is six years?"

"What can you want to know?" they asked.

"*Everything*," I replied, "about people."

"You know," said one of my teachers, accusingly, "you always did take a morbid interest in illness and crime."

"Well," I said, "that's all right. Now I'm going to indulge it."

I indulged it freely in succeeding years, and a

period of satisfying fullness passed. Things I wanted came my way, and were good. Things I did not want came my way, and turned out good also. I merely mention my early life in order to be able to remark that history repeats itself. When I was appointed an inspector of prisons and assistant inspector of State and certified inebriate reformatories, there were not wanting those who came forward to discourage me. Some said such a large job must be too much for my powers, and certainly it sounded large. Others said it was a "come-down" for a doctor to take, not a medical, but a discipline appointment in connection with prisons. Others exhorted me to be proud of serving King and country, as if I had never done that previously. Some thought that if you joined one of the public services in middle life, you might, with some difficulty, get into your swing, but had their doubts in my case. Then an old and dear friend came to see me, and said, "Weel—ye've a vested interest now. Ye can get drunk every day if ye like." I did not know what he meant, but I promised that when I felt like it I would summon him, neighbourly, to drink with me. He rapped his stick on the floor and said, "Mind me! Ye're done for. Ye've sold your soul!"

I did not agree with him. He was an army doctor, and I knew he had never sold his. I did not see why I should have to sell mine. On the contrary, I considered I had bought the right

to enter a certain garden of the soul and see what grew there. And of this more later, when we go wading through nettles breast-high in search of the forget-me-nots. I promised not to presume on my privileges by getting drunk, put on my best clothes, evaded the photographers who for a few days pervaded the doorstep, and went to work.

The manner of my introduction into the department and initiation into my work as inspector, was, I believe, characteristic of the best traditions of the public services. I reported on duty. Everyone who met me for the first time informed me that I was a New Departure. I felt it must be so. I noticed presently that very trivial remarks of mine called forth this phrase, and, finally concluded that it was another way of saying that I was the egg of the cockatrice and people were nervous as to what would hatch out of me. No mere man, medical or otherwise, could have inspired these feelings. It made me nervous myself, and I wondered whether having been born a woman, and brought up as a human being, I should be required by Providence to die an inspector. I know now, in old age, that I shall die a New Departure.

For a short time there was no vacant room for me at the Home Office, and I began my work from my own house.

I suppose it was in the appointed order of things, that, when a large parcel of official

stationery arrived for my use, the first thing that fell out was a bundle of new red tape—that classic symbol of so much. The first valuable lesson I learnt, in fact, was, that red tape is black, white, pink or green, but never red. To return to the parcel—a shower of quill pens next descended from its end to the floor, subsequent instruments of those official flights of fancy of mine that now lie buried in their last long pigeon-holes. I often wonder when the last trump sounds, and the earth shrivels like a scroll of minute paper, and the secrets of all . . . but this is no place for sentiment.

I remember suggesting that I should visit a prison with one of the other inspectors in order to learn my duties. This, however, appears to have been contrary to precedent. Being a New Departure I had to make all my own precedents.

I was directed to go to a prison and study it in detail, until I was satisfied I knew all that could be known about it. I did. The Chief Warder accompanied me, and undertook my enlightenment, and answered, or could not answer, my many hundreds of questions. I think she and I derived amusement from our two or three days together, for whenever we met afterwards we both broke into reminiscent smiles at the thought of it. However, it is meet that dignity should be sacrificed to efficiency, and I might have learned much less had Red Tape been there. I must have been like the new gardener who goes round the garden

with you, and observes of your most treasured plants, that he will soon clear away all that rubbish. When I arrived at headquarters, brimming over with zeal and ideas, they had gently but firmly to take the roller over me.

"Ah," they said, when the cockatrice had finished talking, "you are a lady, and enthusiastic. You must learn to understand discipline."

I said I knew something about work and institutions.

Not this work, or these institutions.

I said there was plenty to do, I could see.

No, there was not. I must not think of *doing* anything.

What was I there for then?

To *inspect*.

In my first round of inspections I unwittingly provided a sensation in several prisons. For I again asked more questions than had been asked in the memory of official man, and had no appreciation of delicate official shades in the answers. Everybody was very kind to me. When I propounded the absolutely impossible, they charitably said I "brought in a fresh point of view." It was natural, perhaps, in a New Departure to do so. Yes—things were as I had remarked them, and if I wanted them otherwise—well—I was a lady and enthusiastic. And so I beat upon time-worn rocks until I myself was pulped into a suitable consistency for working without friction.

In the Certified Reformatories I had no trouble in learning my way about. I brought no new ideas to the Medical Superintendents. We spoke the same language. My medical knowledge was all to the good, and I could hardly have been an efficient inspector without it. In the prisons it served me in that amount of stead which will appear as I write.

My proper work, which, however, I generally managed to exceed, was mechanical and easy. A woman of very little education could have done all that was required. The prison rules are simple, and standing orders are standing orders all the world over.

Brief reports were required of me, and at first I erred, as do all new brooms, through zeal. But it was a novel and strange experience to come suddenly into a public service, and there was always an odd feeling of unreality about it. It took me some years to become of the necessary pattern, and I fear I was never true to type. The feeling of responsibility for what I dealt with, and did, with which my professional training had imbued me, was always breaking through.

My work was not in the least interesting. If I had allowed myself to be bored by it, or dismayed by the long railway journeys round and round England and Wales, or by melancholy sojourns in the uninviting and often dirty hotels of my country's unprepossessing towns, I might have given it up. Certainly, to have made the

mere inspection of prisons my life-work would have been to throw it away. Fortunately it never became my serious business in life. There was a limit to it. My time was not fully employed. I was a swift worker, and had frequently little to do. I had therefore plenty of time to live. A more uninteresting official history than mine could not well be found. Not having begun, it ends here. From this point I am the insignificant unofficial chiel who took these notes, and who having, according to the doctor friend, sold her own soul—hunted the souls of others round their prison cells, and out at the doors, and under the proud waters that had gone over them, or over the mountain tops that baulked them, and so back to their prison again.

Now one thing that we know about people is, that when something unwonted happens to them and turns the current of their life, when, for instance, they are on a journey, a voyage, or a holiday, are having an enforced rest or change, or are newly in love, or in grief, they are liable to become above-measure interesting and self-revealing. It is the same about coming to prison. Some of us, when in a difficulty, hurl ourselves at Leviathan in the open boat, as did Herman Melville's hero in pursuit of Moby Dick. Some flee from life, running before the Hound of Heaven as did Francis Thompson. The chase and conflict are the opportunity of all. That chase or hand-to-hand fight with life takes place

in many a still corner of existence, in many a soul called lost, or body battered to quietude. It is nowhere more active than in the prison cell where vivid living proceeds apace. In your cell you seize on something, or something seizes on you. You have your rest, your holiday, or your voyage, or the reverse. But you go somewhere and do something. Thuswise I calculated on coming, in this garden of the soul, on a vein of something precious, that would make worth while the acceptance of the inconsiderable wages that are ever the portion of the student of the soul—and of my sex. I knew that if I did not get what I sought, my profession need not fail me, and that I need not continue to pay the price.

The material I was after offered itself as I had anticipated. In the first year of my service 40,195 women were sent to prison, and although the number has since materially decreased, my tale is true of the ample remainder.

Year by year I had all these fellow creatures to look at and to talk to, for as long as I chose. It was a swift communion of souls, but in prison you come straight to the point. It is a temple of truth. No one else seemed to be interested, no one wanted to take them from me. Many people thought they did not get the truth from prisoners. These were the people who did not realize the colour of red tape. Prisoners themselves, not their classification, nor marks, nor industry, nor gruel, nor cell furniture, were the real objects of

my scrutiny. These other things were my excuse for being there.

I soon became fairly expert at selecting from the long rows of cells, or from the associated working parties, the people who were worth my while. I had only to go to them in order to receive. They gave me so much that I was ashamed of my own poverty of response. They held up to me a mirror in which to see myself at new angles. They searched my soul, they showed me aspects of existence which I had ignored. They reflected their dumb pains upon me, and laid before me elemental secrets of character and inheritance. I could not begin to live until I had lived first with them. Whether hunted by, or hunting life, they showed me an amount of glowing *elan vital* that was a denial of all theories of lost souls.

Of course I saw to it that they had the blankets and soap and salt, and baths, and prayer-books that were their due, and that they understood their rights, and so on. They themselves had hardly anything to say about such things; they might have been desert anchorites for all their regard of most of the necessaries it was my work to supervise. If we talked in the local prison, it was on topics that made life real to each of us, of men, or children, or drink, of money, or bets, or debts, of revenge, or of unlawful acquisition of lovers, or clothes, or of the sport of evading citizens' duties, or the police. We forgot the

cell furniture, the open world was our prayer-book or our trap, as we took it to be, and we could always have tears for salt. Or in the convict prison we discussed the best method of keeping your temper until you had got your "ticket."

To my trained doctor's perceptions the contribution which this surging stream of the submerged was capable of making to scientific research was of surpassing interest. The explanation of so much incompetence to live could be found in such trifling things. One could have diagnosed and classified according to so many varieties of infirmity, eccentricity, or deformity of mind and body, according to so many varieties of bad health, according to so many accidents to the personality which had resulted in distortion of outlook, incorrigible levity, infantility, invincible sloth, or the general paresis of vagabondage, or to yet other crippling circumstances which were operating to keep the prisoner from a proper adaptation to life.

If all the mental dissociation and defect, all the physical disability and nervous irritability, all the deep passivity, or paralysis or perversion of desire had been subtracted, there would have been no criminals to study. Yet it is pitifully easy to find yourself in the ranks of criminal, if, in addition to other adverse circumstances, you have bad sight or hearing, or are paralysed, or maimed of limb, or have fallen into a hysteroid or epileptoid state. Or, again, if you have been

forced in self-defence to acquire fixed ideas or obsessions which make you dangerous to others. You may be too old, or ugly or useless, or too young and ignorant and easily exploitable, to be wanted or supported by any other human being, or your tastes and instincts may have driven you to solitary or predatory wandering in the countryside in preference to the alternative of rotting in a slum. If you cannot make a living, and no one will make it for you, and if no orderly activities are open to you, you are soon liable to be sorted out by the police, and to find your prison cell waiting for you.

No doubt you have the choice of seating yourself among the living dead in the workhouse, but there is more of the infective *elan vital* in other societies, or in the prison.

Among the Medical Officers of prisons were men of scientific mind who would have delighted to work on the rich material that came under their hand. But the field of research happened to be no more in the line of their work than it was in mine. The things of science had to go unregarded, just as the things of the soul had to drain away down the gutters of time.

It was among the problems of personality that I met the underdog of many an unequal fight for, or against what life had to give, and learnt of the width of the gulf between desire and achievement.

In cell after cell in the corridors of the house

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of shame sat living illustrations of the effects of some organic, or functional "hold-up," enduring as best they might the super-misfortune—imprisonment.

You might happen in one cell on a stripped spirit and feel the twang of its nerves, in the next on a *heap of flesh* craving dully for drink, in another on the mother<sup>1</sup> whose suckling child had been sent to the workhouse while she came to prison, in another on a woman newly admitted, who did not remember what she had done nor why she was here. In my rounds I met with all possible contrasts. There was the young girl who cried, and trusted me with her tale, the defiant<sup>2</sup> recidivist who took a kind word as an insult, the born human explosive whose lurid language discharged itself through the building at the mere sight of an inspector. There was the Irish woman who joined me in laughing at her own romances, the gipsy with the smile that is none on her face, the aged woman who advised me in detail as to my personal morals. There was the open-faced, sun-burnt woman of the "road" and hopfield, or the inert wreck who stared at me in imbecile hebetude. There was the alien whom a few words in Yiddish or French rendered pathetically voluble. There was the silent confounded girl of 16 with a baby coming. And there was the old acquaintance who had

<sup>1</sup> If over six months old. This is happily now a thing of the past.

<sup>2</sup> Habitual offender.

saved up a grievance "against I came round," as an excuse for a chat.

We shall meet these types again when we consider them in relation to their imprisonment. All were units in that struggling world, where people mean so well that they never cease to be surprised when something or someone hunts and punishes them. Some of these I have known for twelve or fifteen years, and whereas I have now finished doing my "time," they will go on coming again and again to prison until such time as the man with the scythe reaps and sows them elsewhere.

No scientific effort has ever been made so far, to discover the reaction of imprisonment on the criminal, but that is the solution that now calls aloud for solution. Why do we talk so loudly about reform and put up with so little? Why are we as sure as we are that, when our criminal fails to be reformed, the fault is his, and not ours?

In my thirteen years of experience I saw many effects on the persons imprisoned of the cardinal feature of our prison system, penal discipline. The question I asked myself was, What have we done by our system to, or for this person, and how? What, as the consequence, is his attitude towards his imprisonment, and towards life? What have we made worth his while? If we look we can see, and, if ever we call in experts to help us, we shall see much more.

I saw some prisoners who counted and realized

the whole cost of law-breaking, took the sporting risks, and got through the consequences. I saw others to whom the prison was a haven of rest. I saw many to whom it was an incredible torture, bravely borne as long as might be. I saw many confirmed and sealed by it in their criminality. All were injured, either by paralysis of initiative, or distortion of point of view, by false envisagement of their individual problems, by perversion of attitude, or by emotional conflicts and mental illness. The thing that injured them was not discipline, but penal discipline. My point will, perhaps, only be shown when I come to penal discipline in its severe forms. Whether it is severe or light, we have now in our hands numerous mentally dissociated and practically incurable women who have trod the winepress of the wrath of God and man all their adult days in prison, and to three of the most pitiful examples of whom, I dedicate this book.

## CHAPTER II

### THE PETTY OFFENDER

That it may not be thought that I sympathize unduly with either crime or the criminal, and also that I may break ground for a consideration of the human material to which the prison system is applied, I should like to refer my readers to the Reports of the Prison Commissioners, which are issued annually. They will find the figures and tables instructive reading. They can know from these tables why prisoners were sent to prison, which of them became insane, which of them died, at what ages, and in what stage of their detention. They can see how many were punished by prison punishments. They can see what their sentences were, and what their (nominal, paper) earnings were. I am no great believer in statistics or percentages. Statistics can never tell us how much delinquency there is in our midst. Percentages dull the imagination and hide the facts. Prison figures only refer to the caught. They do not tell us how many men or women the magistrates punished by fine or let off, but only refer to those actually received into prison. And many of these would never have come to prison at all, had they been able, or had they thought it worth while to pay a fine.

Magistrates and judges have wide powers, and no doubt public opinion is fairly accurately represented in the sentences they award. But public opinion is liable to vary and change, and to call at one time for the punishment of one class of offence, at another time for another, according to current moral conceptions. And public opinion, also, undergoes modification regarding the amount of punishment which fits the action which it has made illegal.

In huge centres of population, where large groups are practically both gregarious and nomadic, public opinion upon conduct arrives at coherence with difficulty. It is apt to resolve itself into group-opinions out of which the general moral standard eventually crystallizes. Since the whole process is a continually changing one, and since, also, punishment is administered with some sort of regard to the individual delinquent, a very "rough" justice is ever administered through the prison system. And the more attention is paid to the whole circumstances of the offender the "rougher" does the justice become that is done upon him through imprisonment, which often cannot be made relevant to his case at all.

The belief that punishment deters from crime is largely an unfounded assumption. Bodies of persons may be, and, indeed, are, deterred by the punishments they have ordained as the result of their findings. As regards those to whom

imprisonment does represent a disgraceful and real punishment, on the whole they take care not to incur it. As regards those who incur it, either because they can hardly help doing so, or because they do not take the trouble to avoid it, they do not allow it to affect their opinions, or improve their conduct. So that, while it might really punish those who manage to avoid it, it affects in the least degree, and deters to a very small extent, those who know it by experience.

The men who incur punishment have been aptly enough described as falling into three main classes: (1) Those whose offences are isolated and are the result of "sudden temptation," and who may, therefore, be called accidental offenders; (2) Those whose offences are a consequence of lack of control over themselves; and (3) Those who being, as it were, short-circuited by adverse circumstances from the opinions of the main herd, have chosen "the adventure of living without the law."

The individual who elects to live without the law appears to many of us to be the most deliberate, and therefore the most anti-social of the three varieties of offender, and this is the class, which for my own purposes I characterize as "vagabond." But the above classification merely provides a method of sorting out delinquents for special forms of treatment, and probably, before long, psychologists will have shown us that there is but one natural law under-

lying these apparently different reactions to the vetoes of the superior herd, and will point us to one treatment of all.

In considering the question of the treatment of either petty offence or crime, there is a factor upon which we must fasten our attention if we would make any progress. All the laws of our land are made in order directly to control instinctive acts which, good in themselves, must only be performed with due regard to the rights of other individuals and the good of the community. If an offender is to be corrected he must know what is the matter with him. It is difficult to ask a man when he commits a felony, or a misdemeanour, or even breaks a town police clause, or local by-law, to reflect as to which of his instincts is taking the bit in its teeth, and bolting with him. For usually he does not know what his instincts are, or what real affair they are of his, or when indeed, although he believes he is controlling them, they are, in reality controlling him.

My experience with numbers of prisoners is that they will accept their instincts as a practical basis of argument on conduct, when they will accept no other. When a man can look at these, he can look much farther. Herd-morality then begins to have intellectual validity for him, and shows him what, as a man, he must think, and feel and believe, and may force from him, as it forces from us all, an ultimate acquiescence in its

value. It is as important for us, his gaolers, to understand our make-up, as it is for him to understand his.

If we survey the huge mass of petty offences, which earn short sentences or fines, we find that the majority fall under a few general headings, which indicate a low and vagabond attitude, or way of living, and which are totally inconsistent, not only with public comfort and order, but with a normal and decent home and family life. Thousands of men and women are punished every year for the more flagrant disorderly offences, of thieving, assaults, ill-treating and neglecting children, indecency, drunkenness, prostitution, sleeping-out, and other acts of vagrancy. From these conditions emanate various vampire trades—for instance, the trade of brothel-keeping, and that of destroying immature life, unlawful drug-selling, etc. Very miserable conditions and standards, and hideous injuries to children prevail in circles in which such living is taken for granted, and in which perverted and uncontrolled ego-instinct is in the ascendant.

There is little question that disorderly living does far more injury to the community than do the few crimes that obtain for their perpetrators long terms of imprisonment or penal servitude. The petty offender is a contaminating influence in many small or large areas. Drunkenness and promiscuous sexual relations demoralize indivi-

duals and seal them to an irresponsible life. Dishonesty and want of thrift go hand in hand. Groups of low and vicious people, destitute of decent standards, give way to individual or organized larceny, and are as much a nuisance to their own poor neighbours as to other citizens. This is the milieu from which comes the young multiple offender, and unfortunately, respectable people and their children are often forced, by poverty, into contact with it. Homes crumble to pieces, children are neglected or deserted, or thousands of them grow up from a life of squalor and terror with unconscious conflicts and nervous symptoms which darken their lives, and render them an easy prey to bad influences.

The inhumanity of parents of the vagabond class is unbounded, and I have known mothers in prison drink-up the milk provided for them to feed their infant children.

Boys and girls alike grow up in an atmosphere of corruption, and girls, especially from the lower working class, stream abroad as prostitutes.

Petty disorder is a very poisonous factor in the social organism, and exceedingly wasteful of life, property, and happiness. It debases the whole moral currency, and reacts for evil in all classes. In every class the frivolous, inconsequent, light-minded, or weak-minded people whose own defences are inadequate, are ready upon example, or upon the least persuasion, to take a step downwards, and prison histories show how often the

*decensus averni* is accomplished in a few quick leaps to the bottom.

The diminution in the prison population is considered as satisfactory evidence that an improvement in this state of affairs is gradually coming about. The reasons for the diminution are, however, not really known. I shall return to this question.

But let us take more or less at random the five years from 1909, the year of my appointment as inspector, to 1914, the last year in which prison statistics of offences were published. During these five years the men sent to prison went down in numbers by 41,696; with this fall of prison population various serious as well as petty offences diminished. Certain degraded offences, however, increased, both relatively and absolutely, and, in 1914, more men were sent to prison for rape and for defilement of girls under 13 and under 16. As regards the women, although there were 6,781 fewer of them, their summary convictions for cruelty to children showed an increase, their convictions for procuring abortion had doubled, prostitution had increased, concealment of birth had increased.

These years immediately before the war were years of great hardship for women, and it was difficult for even capable and educated women to support themselves. Employment was scarce, and wages were low. It is certain that many committed their offences because of their bad

conditions. I lay stress on the number of offences, petty and serious, committed in relation to sex and the family, because none others show the general moral and social conditions of the population so well.

I will take the year 1908 to illustrate the way in which punishments are given to offenders. In this year 176,602 men and women were sent to prison. Out of the whole 176,602 persons, only 5,142 had over six months imprisonment. Out of 135,651 men, only 4,780 had over six months, and out of 40,957 women only 362 had six months imprisonment.

The 362 women with over six months could easily have been received in one prison. For them, and all the rest, 45 prisons were kept up.

The punishments of the men included the following :—

|        |                           |
|--------|---------------------------|
| 44,964 | had not more than 2 weeks |
| 48,314 | „ „ „ 1 week              |
| 15,864 | „ „ „ 6 days              |
| 5,311  | had 4 days and under.     |

The punishments of the women included the following :—

|        |                           |
|--------|---------------------------|
| 10,915 | had not more than 2 weeks |
| 11,556 | „ „ „ 1 week              |
| 4,288  | „ „ „ 6 days              |
| 2,885  | „ „ „ 5 days              |
| 1,231  | had 4 days and under.     |

Out of over 40,000 women prisoners, over 30,000 or three-quarters of the whole, had been previously convicted, and over 30,000 or three-quarters of the whole, had not had more than two weeks imprisonment.

The number of individual women who came to prison during this year must have been many fewer than 40,000. The manufacture of the habitual offender, or recidivist, as she is called—is a very swift affair. In 1911 I made a record of all the first offenders, 21 in number, under 21 years of age, who were received into one prison during the year. During the 12 months following their first conviction these 21 girls were sent to prison 72 times. Only one was committed once, all the rest were committed from one to seven times each during the year. In the same prison I picked out 136 “juvenile adult” prisoners who had been committed in respect of from two to nine different kinds of offence. The disorderly life of the multiple offender is well seen in the following example :—

X.—First offence when 21. Subsequent offences 25 in number, viz. : Drunk, 13; Indecent behaviour, 3; Abusive language, 1; Prostitution, 2; Insulting behaviour, 1; Obscene language, 1; Damage, 1; Assault, 1; Obstructing the police, 1.

Elderly or aged women who began in this way and who have been coming to prison in short sentences practically all their adult lives, are to be found at all times in the prisons. There are

women who have been convicted 20 or 30 times before they are 20 years old. There are women whose convictions run into hundreds,<sup>1</sup> or of whose convictions all count has been lost.

In their Report for 1920-1, the Prison Commissioners show the proportion of women habitual offenders received during the year. Out of 11,043 women convicted, only 2,943 were believed not to have been previously convicted, and 8,100 had been disposed of as follows:—

|       |                    |                |
|-------|--------------------|----------------|
| 3,062 | had been convicted | 1 to 4 times   |
| 299   | „ „                | 5 times        |
| 970   | „ „                | 6 to 7 times   |
| 1,128 | „ „                | 11 to 20 times |
| 2,648 | „ „                | over 20 times  |

The last figures on this list show that 2,648 women had had at least 52,960 convictions between them in 1921 and previous years.

On one occasion I made a similar count of all the women who had been sent, in ten years, to one prison. I came to the conclusion that in ten years, only about 5,000 individuals had passed through the prison, but that they accounted for about 30,000 convictions.

If, therefore, we count heads, instead of convictions, the problem at once shrinks to proportions which lead us to hope that it may not prove beyond the powers of the State to do something in the future for the repression of

<sup>1</sup> The few days' sentences are now seldom given, and this, and the part payment of fines now permitted, account for a large reduction in the committals during recent years.

vagabondage. If the disorderly and criminal career of the young offender could be checked, the accumulation of past years would soon cease.

The habitual offender takes a logical view of her own case. Her view is that nobody minds taking risks in this world. If they do, they don't get far. She soon gains a nice appreciation of the relation between the various offences that she thinks it worth while to commit, and the bit of money of her own or her friends, or the bit of "time" that may have to pay for them. She seldom takes the trouble to deny what she did, or to conceal the facts. She argues that the main use of liberty is that you may do as you please.

In conversation, the inspector gets at once at the prisoner's point of view—and I give here examples, out of hundreds that I could give, of the attitude of the habitual offender towards her punishment.

*No. 1:* "Wot's seven days?"

*No. 2:* "Wot's a month? Now you can't have done much harm if you only gets a month—can you?"

*No. 3:* "Pay me fine? No fear! There's a bloke as will pay it all right on Saturday afternoon."

*Young girl of 17:* "First he (the magistrate) lets me orf. Then he lets me orf again. Then he puts me on probation. Now he sends me 'ere. What's 'e wanten send me 'ere for? I ain't done anyfink, or he'd have given me somefink for it the first time."

*Habitual drunkard*: "Yes'm. 'Ere I am for a wash and brush up (a few days' imprisonment). Whaffor? O lawks! I forget what the copper said I done. Same as usual I suppose."

*Another*: "What's it for? Nothink at all but crossing the road. All the p'liceman's spite. 'E's a very spiteful man—that."

*Inspector*: "Why did you not keep out of his way?"

*Prisoner*: "Well, I would have done. But how could I, when I was so drunk I couldn't see him. What's a little drop of booze got to do with 'im? Surely a person can cross the road?"

*Inspector* (to destitute old woman, newly admitted): "What! four months? How did you manage to get it?"

*Prisoner* (a shop-lifter): "Yes, lady, isn't it a bit of luck? Takes me right through the cold weather. And what's more, I didn't do nothink for it—(an additional triumph over the law). I just loitered outside those shops where they copped me before."

*Young Girl* (remanded for the first time, and about to appear at the police-court): "Oh, I do hope I shan't be sent to prison. Do you think I shall?"

*Matron*: "And where do you think you are now?"

*Young Girl*: "What! Is this prison? Oh, well then—I don't mind."

*Inspector* (to intelligent woman): "What are you sent here for?"

*Prisoner*: "For a portmanter, mum."

*Inspector*: "This your first time?"

*Prisoner*: "Well, it's the second, to tell yer the truf. But there, it's nothing to what it might have been if they'd catched me!"

*Inspector*: "It's your profession, is it?"

*Prisoner*: "Just abaht."

*Inspector*: "One of these days you'll get a penal sentence."

*Prisoner* (laughing): "Don't say that, lady. I shouldn't like that."

*Inspector* (to young woman): "What did you do?"

*Prisoner* (in tones of indignation): "Why *they* say I stole a pair of bewts."

*Inspector* (slowly and softly): "And did you?"

*Prisoner* (giving it up): "Yes."

*An Offender* who was committed for twelve months under the Vagrancy Act as an incorrigible rogue, asked :

"What in the world have I got all this time for? I've done it (the offence) dozens of times before. And what's an 'incorrigible rogue,' anyway?"

*Inspector*: "A rogue is a person who has not the least intention of trying to live honestly or respectably. That's you—isn't it?"

*Prisoner*: "O yes."

*Inspector*: "Incorrigible means un-correctable. You are a person on whom short punishment has no effect. Before you were punished to try to

stop you from *doing as you did*. Now you are punished for *being what you are*. Understand?"

*Prisoner*: "Yes—and (with a beaming smile) *perfectly right*."

Such examples show not only the effect of imprisonment on attitude, but the easy spirit of vagabondage, and light-hearted disregard for the law which short imprisonment may engender, and serve to accentuate.

The woman arrives at the prison, often in a very dirty condition. She is bathed, her clothing washed and fumigated, her hair cleansed, her skin diseases treated. If an old offender, she takes up her bucket or needle where she laid it down yesterday, or last week. She does a very little work, she brings in the news, her home and children, if she has any, look after themselves. If she stays for a month or so she improves in health and usually puts on flesh. She gathers energy for her next debauch. She goes away often only to return again—and yet again.

The system under which she is dealt with for her delinquency is a very expensive absurdity. It is not only expensive to the moral standards of the community, but also to the purse of the taxpayer. The cost to the country of treating prisoners on the present plan has, perhaps, never been estimated. Not only are they expensively detained in prison, but frequently, as a result of their lives they go the round of other institutions—poor-houses, asylums, or hospitals. Other

people maintain many of their children in other institutions. The cost of arresting them, conveying them long distances by train or other means, to and from police-stations, courts, and prisons, augments the heavy bill. A woman may travel many miles, and cost a large sum of money, in order to serve her seven days.

It is essentially a question for the tax-payer as to whether he gets value of any sort or kind for the money spent.

Of the effect of her life upon the disorderly offender's mentality I speak in another place.

We now come to the effect upon the social group who are not punished, but who carry out punishment of the offender.

The more controlled and more educated, who are the law-givers, have a feeling that good fortune makes it easier for them to behave themselves than people find it whose outlook is narrow, and whose chances are poor. They feel that they escape, while those who live more upon the surface of the world, and under the eye of the police, do not. They do not like punishing their fellow-creatures for what appear to them mere misfortunes. They prefer to argue that the illegal acts are comparatively unimportant, and that the mark of public disapproval indicated by a light punishment is enough. They point with pride to the fact that the petty offender is a vanishing quantity, that, year after year the prison population falls. Yet it may be falling not because

offences have decreased, but because they are more lightly regarded, and because public feeling is reflected in fewer arrests by the police, and more leniency and letting-off on the part of the magistrate.

Unfortunately, as long as the system of giving so much punishment for so much delinquency in ever decreasing quantities, prevails, those punished will continue to believe that their offences are insignificant, that luck or the ill-will of neighbours or the police have everything to do with their imprisonment, and themselves next to nothing. Among the prosperous classes it is a common thing to hear people admitting: "Oh, yes! We are all guilty of some of these things, only we are not caught!" In this way the respectable and uncaught identify themselves with low prevailing standards, and when they are required to punish are unwilling to do so. That is—unless they fall over the drunken man in their own carriage drive, or it is their bag that is found in the hands of the thief. That is liable to affect their point of view.

If you happen to be one of the punished, insignificant punishments have another effect. They are often merely a foretaste of a deferred punishment—to be continued on your discharge. The man whose till you robbed, or whose head you broke, is not satisfied with the little bit of inconvenience you have been put to by the magistrate, which has amply satisfied you. He

goes about saying what you ought to have had, and how he will supplement your deserts for you when you are at large again. Sometimes, therefore, you do not pay a fine when you might, or do not return for a time where a street or family vendetta may be awaiting you. You prefer to let absence make them miss you. When you do come again to the bosom of your family, the subscribers to a part of your last fine, the losers by your earnings while you were "put away," the sufferers by your conduct, have to be appeased. Unquestionably your real punishment may begin, not at the hands of the placid minions of the law, or of the kindly magistrate, but at the hands of those who tell you what they think of you, and number your transgressions for you on another basis.

But you do not come out of it all with any more clear ideas of what society demands of you as a citizen, and a responsible being. You stand a drink to your victim, or contribute to *his* next fine, and things are square. It is manifest that something would have squared them whether you had had your so-called "punishment" inflicted on you by the law or not. So you adhere to Mr. Bumble's opinion of the law, and live on gloriously without it.

## CHAPTER III

### HER DISCIPLINE

Let us follow the petty offender to her prison. If it is her first offence she arrives there in awe. The high walls, the big keys, the echoing noises, and the banging of the iron doors of the cells may frighten her at first. After that it turns out better than she expected, and she often tells the inspector that "everybody is very kind to her."

When I was a child I once asked my mother what "sentenced to hard-labour" meant. She replied that it meant that a prisoner had to do very hard work indeed whether he wished to or not. I made, and kept for years, a picture of galley and other slaves mercilessly driven at labour beyond their strength. I always afterwards kept my idea that hard labour punished the performer severely. When I began my prison work I was surprised to find that hard labour meant an exceedingly moderate day's work in scrubbing, or at the wash-tub, and since active work is more agreeable to most strong women than sedentary tasks, such as needlework, I was not surprised to find that a large number of prisoners described themselves, on reception, as good washers but bad needlewomen. I should have done so myself.

I also learned that committal to hard labour is only a way of putting it on the part of the magistrates. I have seen many a poor creature sentenced to it who was incapable of it, or of any other labour. The final arbiter of prison tasks is, of course, the prison doctor.

Any woman prisoner was only too glad to work if she could, and punishments for idleness or refusal to work were very few. Only a few mentally unstable women gave any trouble. The majority liked work. Sometimes I had to speak to a prisoner who had "got across" discipline and ask her to try to be more amenable and agreeable. I usually got the reply: "Well, I *have* got a bit of temper, but I've done me work. Nobody can tell you different." Work was indeed the great antidote to the antagonism to authority generated by imprisonment. When you were at work all the control was not on one side; you yourself, were controlling something, and so righting the balance. If I met a woman in some quiet corner of the prison putting a high polish on something, or engaged in the heady business of swabbing the corridors on all fours, or shovelling coke into the furnaces at top speed and "too busy with me work" to be interrupted, I took it for granted that this work was medicine of an effective kind.

If I knew that I was going to get a complaint about discipline, I usually got there first, if I could.

For instance. *Inspector*: "Annie, I've been looking at your board (for registering marks). What have you gone and lost marks for? Don't you want to get out of this?"

*Prisoner*: "Well, they would erritate me, and I flew out at 'em, but (in triumph) look at me stove."

*Inspector*: "Well, your stove is a real credit to you. Be a good girl, won't you, and get out of this as quickly as you can. They must want you at home."

What more is to be said to Annie with two months' "time" before her, and an inherent liability to be "erritated" by orders.

In a local prison discipline consists mainly in the enforcement of such rules as are necessary for the peace, well-being, and safety of prisoners. The proper ordering of an establishment which is full of uncontrolled and disorderly people, the quarrelsome, the eccentric, the half sane, all mixed together, and having to get on together as best they may in a confined space, is no easy task. The *régime*, which is concerned with food, clothing, bedding, the award of marks, remission of sentence, or the provision of books, medical treatment, ministers of religion, is another matter altogether. So long as order is good, in a local prison the prisoners needs are small. The prison system is not going to affect the prisoner very much one way or the other. No one sympathises with the offender who has com-

mitted an annoying or cruel theft, or is a habitual drunkard, or who assaults other people, or knocks her own children about. She is here to-day and gone to-morrow, and will, perhaps, be back the next day. The public quite rightly does not desire for her that she should be luxuriously or expensively detained. Her detention is unavoidably costly, but it is generally considered that the minimum amount of food and clothing that will keep her in health is enough. Some of us, when we see the ample supplies of good bread and bacon, and suet, and potatoes, and cocoa, in the prison store-rooms, cannot help wishing that the prisoner's children, or perhaps her victims were going to eat it instead of herself. The minimum food and clothing that she gets is good enough. As long as sentences are as short as they are, and as entirely useless as they are, there is no object in making them more comfortable for ordinary offenders, or more agreeable to the few persons of refined and superior habits who ever come to prison. In so far as the coarse food and clothing is a punishment to the refined and well-brought-up prisoner, it perhaps equalizes things a little between her and the woman who has never known her chances.

After my first year as prison inspector I was frequently approached by people who were eager for prison reform, and felt sure that I could get it for them. The suffrage agitation was beginning, and, through it, people were taking a good

deal of interest in prisons and prisoners. All the people who talked to me seemed to take it for granted that petty offenders suffered unreasonable deprivations, or were ill-treated.

When I pointed out to them that the prison rules were statutory and could only be altered by the will of the people who had made them, they went sorrowfully away. Whatever the grievances were, they were not prepared to get up a public agitation to remedy them. Curiously enough many people who wanted to reform prisons ("and now," they said, "that we have a woman inspector we shall get things done") had no idea what they wished to see reformed, and really came to ask me to tell them. Some responsible citizens came who felt uneasy, and who asked intelligent questions. In addition, every shade of crank and amateur took me on in turns. Nearly everybody was convinced (as I had once been) that prisoners ought to have a less hard time. Some thought that bad conditions in the world were a sufficient condonation of all crime, and listened with impatience when I said that all prisoners were not in bad or poor conditions. Some refused to take the question of crime or social disorder seriously. One kind friend wanted to send the prisoners some cakes. Then there were both men and women who had some patent universal cure, and wanted to try it on the prisoners. I could almost wish to have let them—for their own cure. They were often genuinely surprised when I

suggested that prisoners might not wish to consult them, or that they already had their own medical and spiritual advisers. The idea that those in charge of prisoners might not consider them suitable subjects for sentimental benevolence, or general experiment, or that prisoners themselves had any say in the matter, had never entered their minds.

Or I was asked to contend with the Home Secretary on behalf of some poor dear who had no motive for what she did, and whose conviction was all due to the magistrates' mistaken view of her case.

Then there were people who were sure it was very cruel not to allow prisoners to talk. They said it was inhuman, and had been known to drive people mad. In vain I told them that prisoners could talk, and did, at times. This idea of the complete silence enforced seems to have been spread by "suffrage" prisoners, who, being under detention with so many of their friends, did not like being under orders to be silent while at work. Personally I am very fond of talking, but as I live and work a great deal alone, I cannot indulge my desires at all times, and it is nothing for me to pass a whole week saying much less than most prisoners say in a day. It is not to be supposed that my inner resources are greater than those of other people. But as a matter of fact the death-like silence which is supposed to reign in prisons is all a myth. When visitors or inspectors are

not about (and I soon learnt, in that sense, how not to be about) a prison is quite a homely place. Every well-behaved woman who is employed in the prison kitchen, workshop, or laundry, or in any other associated party between the hours of 9.15 and 12, or 1.30 and 4.30, certainly gets opportunities of talking if she does so quietly. If my political friends had consented to the order of silence in the sporting spirit of other offenders, they would have found more opportunities for talking together. But in all working parties it is necessary that the voice of the managing and instructing head should be heard, and that workers should be at attention.

As a matter of fact, prisoners who get absorbed in their work, and who are trying to earn remission marks by good conduct and industry—since they have little skill—do not want to talk.

Let us pursue this one disciplinary question farther, for it will afford us a good text on the difficulties that obtain. It is capable of giving us a prison picture that will help us to understand other things.

It is a well-known psychological fact that people who offend against herd opinion make for themselves certain conflicts which result in an unconscious feeling of inferiority. Whenever we feel inferior we compensate and try to restore the balance by assuming an attitude that is just the reverse. Nowhere is this more plainly seen than in prisons. Ignorant observers have often

commented on the virtuous or superior attitude that prisoners manifest. They are often called vain, perverse, or hypocritical for this. But it indicates an under-attitude more like self-reproach.

Imprisonment is, by reason of this conflict of opposite feelings, by no means a levelling circumstance. The attempt at self-justification is a common reason which leads a prisoner to keep silent, and not associate with her fellows.

Over and over again I have heard : " No, she's no friend of mine ; she's a low woman and I wouldn't have nothing to do with her." " I may be a drunkard, but I ain't a thief." " I may be a thief, but I ain't a drunkard." I have even had it said to me : " I may be a murderer, but that woman was a poisoner and yet she got her ticket (of leave) before me."

Personally, I find this tendency to draw a line a good thing, and I do not call the prisoner's assurances that there are things she would not do, hypocritical. It is rather an unconscious attempt to re-discover a standard of conduct.

On one occasion a prisoner who had a long sentence and who had a severe shock, was transferred from a small prison to a large one because it was feared she might become depressed. She was put to work where she could see all that was going on, with two other non-criminal women. I asked them to be kind to her, and cheer her up. They responded and did their best. Before long

she was abusing them, and refusing to associate with any of her fellows, on grounds of her own superiority, of which no one else could find a trace. It was, however, a wholesome reaction, and told us what she was feeling below the surface about herself. The criminal confessed is a much harder person to deal with.

Another reason that a prisoner may have for not desiring to talk is the fear that other women may recognize her, or, knowing too much about her, may betray her to other prisoners. "I keep myself *to* myself," is the phrase and action that fits this situation.

Again, there is a great deal of touchy temper in prisons. Prison officers know it well, and are obliged to exercise great tact in order not to tempt it to flare. Sometimes a woman, newly received, and with "a little drink in her," will ask that no one should speak to her, or will say to the officer: "Don't let me go near the other women." Sometimes she will walk herself, without being told to do so, to the empty cells kept for violent women, saying: "I'm better here—I'll only smash-up if you put me upstairs." Many women whose own want of control or irritable temper has got them into the "trouble" that brought them to prison, can quickly get into deeper trouble if allowed much verbal communication with their neighbours. A terrible fracas may be provoked by a look or gesture only, and in some companies permission to talk would end in a quarrel or assault, followed by a general fight.

Taunting your fellow-prisoner, which goes by the name of "crucifying" her, can also lead to trouble. In every prison, on almost every landing, is some woman who is recovering from the effects of drink, or who is excitable, hysterical or epileptic. Sometimes she is the victim of delusions not always discovered at once, which make her dangerous to others. On nearly every landing is the superior person prepared to "crucify" with looks and words. Only the utmost vigilance and skill on the part of officers gets some of these women safely through their day's work in association with others.

I always remember with admiration the forethought of an Irish officer in the State Inebriate Reformatory who was in charge of a party of very rough and rather feeble-minded women. She came into the building and said to her superior officer: "I have McCarthy in the garden, but she's going to get in a temper. Will I bring her in?" Her superior said: "Well, I can't do anything until she's in her temper—can I?" The officer replied: "Sure, when she's in it, it'll be too late!"

It is sometimes "too late" from the start. I remember a violent assault that was committed in a work-room in the same institution. The parties simply flew at each other like two savage animals without a word being spoken. On my visit I found the "underdog" with her arm in a sling, with many bruises, and very sorry for herself. I

reproached the victor, a Catholic, with her conduct. "Why," she said, in astonishment, "what would *you* have done if anyone had insulted your religion?" I carefully refrained from asking what the insult consisted of. I replied: "I should have shown her what a good Catholic was." She regarded me earnestly, considering this, and then said: "Well, there's something in what you say."

Trouble can come into a prison in many ways. On one occasion a certain Mrs. Brown had a term of detention. Presently a friend arrived, to do a little time, and informed Mrs. Brown that, in her absence, a Mrs. Jones was keeping house for her husband. Later came Mrs. Jones to do a little time on her own account. Mrs. Brown, who had already conceived it to be her duty to "learn Mrs. Jones to keep 'ouse for 'er 'usband," carried out this duty on one of the prison landings. With a stream of women coming in and out of prison every day, news of all sorts is carried, and introductions are made, which nothing can prevent.

The character and *régime* of our prison system has undergone much change as time has passed. When the great Mrs. Fry first visited Newgate prison she was appalled at the dreadful sights, the horrible language, and the uncontrolled behaviour of prisoners who were associated together without occupation. The reforms for which she agitated ended in the cellular system. This was not satisfactory, and modifications were introduced

which allowed prisoners to work in association during certain hours. Even within my own memory, only prisoners with sentences of over a month were allowed to work in association, and since nearly all had very short sentences, few enjoyed the privilege which is now enjoyed by all who are fit for it. The present system of association under discipline is more natural, and more like conditions in streets and workshops where people live under the law, and may not quarrel, or use bad language, or annoy other people.

As a matter of fact, prisoners, nine or ten of every dozen of whom know the prison rules and discipline inside and out, are many of them exceedingly critical of the management of a prison, and have not the least difficulty in obeying orders. One may safely assert that the sane among them are on the side of discipline, for they realize what a hell a prison could become without it.

Most of them are quite concerned that rules should be kept, and were a warder to be attacked prisoners would promptly rescue her and punish the offender. In the mass their herd instinct makes more in favour of good order than against it, because in prison they are still a part of that larger herd—the world—of which the same is true.

Many of the prisoners were experts in living under control in various institutions, and I used

to hear their opinions on the rules they came under. In spite of softer conditions in other places, they certainly worked harder and behaved better in prison than elsewhere. Their reason was always that the prison rule was easier—but I am disposed to think it was easy because it was short. Here, however, is an impartial opinion on discipline. On one of my inspections of a northern prison, I could see that a new broom had been sweeping clean. Things were rather spick and span, and a holy calm pervaded the place. I stopped to pass the time of day with an old expert, and she gave me the news. “The new Governor’s a nice gentleman, Dr. Gordon. ’E will ’ave discipline, but there—I never object to that myself. What I say is, you like to know where you *are* wiv ’em.”

It is a great responsibility to have under one roof, often in one wing, the new offender, the young girl, the hardened criminal, the brothel-keeper or abortionist, the woman down on her luck, the other woman, ready to exploit or entrap her. The most careful selection, grouping, locating or segregating, cannot always prevent one woman from being a bad acquaintance for another. The silence order can be a great help here. Personally, I think, that, in the present system of short committals, which effects the constant assembling and reassembling of the bad characters of a locality inside the close quarters of a prison, that free intercourse must operate for

harm, lend countenance to the offender, and spread the infection of vagabondage. The prison system itself is the one great harm. Free intercourse at such very close quarters would accentuate it.

A woman on a short sentence needs no distractions. Many prisoners have never before in their lives had time or opportunity to sit down and take a look at their conduct. A little time alone in prison gives them that opportunity, and enables the chaplain and visitors to help them. Many have committed bad or cruel deeds for which they can make no reparation, and which they lightly ignore or forget. They have good cause for thought, and I have advised many to spend the time in thinking. I am sure that some do so with good results.

It will, from what I have said, be obvious that I am on the side of a firm discipline, and have no objection to these particular offenders having an unpleasant week, fortnight, or month under detention.

Lastly, excited and nervous people need quiet surroundings, and a prison should always be a quiet place when its daily changing crowd have surged in and out of it. It may amuse those who would like to make it pleasant, to hear that upon occasion, I myself have been requested to cease talking. As thus :—

*Inspector* (visiting cells and recognizing old friend, newly admitted, and lying in bed) : “Are you all right, Kay? Anything to say?”

*Kay* (in a tone of pained exasperation): "Ow do shurrup. Jore, jore, jore. 'Course I'm all right. Wot jer fink—with yer all right? Coming 'ere and talking me 'ed orf."

Exit Inspector.

*Kay* (sitting up and shouting through the closed door): "If yer want to know I 'ad a rare old booze larst night. Four stouts, six 'alf quarterns," etc., etc. (Topples over and falls asleep).

At a subsequent visit.

*Inspector*: "I haven't forgotten last time, Kay."

*Kay*: "Oh, there! You wouldn't fetch up a little fing like that against me, Dr. Gordon, and you the lady you are, and all."

In the local prison four distinct classes of women are to be found who under any rational treatment for the cure of their delinquency could not be associated in one institution.

There is first of all, the young girl—who ought not to be there at all. Of her I speak later.

There is the aged, infirm, destitute woman, often senile and unable to take care of herself, or to look after herself in prison. Such cases should never come to prison at all, and I believe would not in any other country. Here are a few of my talks with them.

*Inspector*: "Why don't you do as the magistrate advised you, and stop in the work-house?"

*Prisoner*: "In the House if I cough or snore the

others punishes me, and throws things at me. Here I can have a room to myself, and what with three meals a day, and the doctor whenever I want him, I'm better off here."

The prisoner who said this was not a hospital case, but was on a plank bed on the floor of her cell,—which shows that all things in this world are relative.

*Inspector* (to another old woman): "If you'd buy yourself a hot cup of tea instead of the drink, it would do you much more good."

*Prisoner*: "I daresay you won't believe me, lady; I don't know why you should, but it's the truth that a cup of tea makes me just as giddy as the drink."

*Another Prisoner* (in reply to the same observation): "In a tea-shop you has to drink it up, and get out again. In the public I can sit as long as I like, and people is kind to you there, and will treat you to a mouthful. But for that I like the tea well enough."

*Inspector* (to another): "Are you all right? Anything to say?"

*Prisoner*: "Eh?"

*Inspector* (louder, repeating herself).

*Prisoner*: "I dunno."

*Inspector*: "How long have you got?"

*Prisoner*: "I dunno."

*Inspector*: "What did you do?"

*Prisoner*: "I dunno—I forget."

These women could do no work, and sat and stared at the wall, until their time was over.

There are women who commit serious offences, usually frauds or thefts, who get sentences of six months and over. Sometimes they are accidental criminals, such as respectable servants or shop-assistants. The smart punishment usually leaves them repentant, and they do not appear in prison again.

Others are expert facile thieves, and fraudulent persons, whose good manners, good speech, and sometimes good education and nice appearance take-in their victims over and over again. They often confess their offences freely to people who will help them, and are humble, depressed, contrite, and anxious to do well. But they use their whole energies to deceive those who believe in and trust them. They often spend many years doing smart sentences in local prisons before arriving in a convict prison for a longer term of detention. These people are, in my opinion, a prey to their own fantasy, and act upon a considerable degree of auto-suggestion. They live in an unreal world of adventure of their own making, and repeat the same offence over and over again. They should be segregated apart from other offenders, and treated by experts for their psychical state.

Lastly, all those who are disorderly habitual offenders and probably on account of their mental condition unlikely to change their habits, should not be associated with others. Were younger prisoners more scientifically treated their numbers

might materially decrease. They are the vagabond confessed, and have accepted the police, the prison, themselves, their lives for what they are.

On one occasion I was standing looking at a party of about 60 women who were seated at work. The Matron called my attention to the fact that almost everyone of the most incorrigible and noted "habituals" of the town were present. "Just look," she said, "No. 20, 11, 8, 18, 15—there they all are. Isn't it a shame that they come here like this?"

"It is," I replied. "No wonder the Chief Constable is thinking what he will do with them next."

No. 15 was sitting close by. She raised calm eyes to mine, and taking her knitting-needles out of her mouth, spread a newly-finished stocking across her knee.

"Let 'm," she said, tersely. "God blast his sowl!"

## CHAPTER IV

### THE INEBRIATE VAGABOND

There exists no more disgusting object than the individual who habitually soaks in, and poisons body and brain with alcohol, and no more pitiful object than this individual at a stage when he can neither exercise self-control, nor be controlled. In the end he loses family, friends, home, and position, being wanted and trusted by no one, or wanders away alone, a semi-lunatic outcast.

When an individual gets into this condition, and has the good fortune to be put under control where he cannot drink, it is evident to the skilled observer that there is a great deal more the matter than drunkenness. Close examination of such an individual uncovers various neuroses, and other deviations from the normal, and, as a rule, a severe unconscious conflict can be unmasked. The drunkard is a neurotic who is the subject of two adverse conditions over and above those that may affect other people. He has an inherent tendency to be rapidly and deeply poisoned by certain drugs, of which alcohol is the most readily obtainable, and he has an inherent inability to resist the action of these poisons, so that they quickly overcome him. His only safeguard is never to touch the substances in question. If he

is strong enough in mind to do this, fully recognizing and understanding his idiosyncrasy, he may remain sober all his days, although always inebriate to these poisonous substances. Much depends upon the nobility and firmness of character, as well as on the nervous organization of the person born with this defective resistance to alcohol, as to whether he will escape the fate that hangs over him or not.

When confirmed inebriates come to prison, their defects are easily observed. Drunkenness is an attack of mental disease or a state of mental defect in miniature. It may simulate the inert stupidity of the dement, the nervous excitability of the epileptic, or the insane ideas and violent conduct of the maniac. It may temporarily render the subject of it obstinate or imbecile, or unreasonable and dangerous. All types of mental disease and defect have their prototype in drunkenness.

These people are poisoned, in many instances, by a very small quantity of alcohol. Drunkenness, which occurs in recurrent attacks is known as dipsomania, and there is a fulminating variety of this, in which the drunken attack may break out at long intervals and with such violence that the individual may, in one act, bring about his own death.

In addition to this type of drinker we have the chronic soaker, the person who absorbs large quantities of beer and spirits and who, if never

very drunk, is also seldom really free from the influence of alcohol. In this category come those excessive drinkers known as industrial drinkers. They "carry" large quantities of drink without committing offences or getting into the hands of the police. They are often much heavier drinkers than the individuals belonging to the dipsomaniac group. Their habit is written upon them, while those of the other type seldom show signs of chronic poisoning, and do not suffer from cirrhosis and other degenerative changes of tissue to the same extent.

It should also be remembered that a self-indulgent parent who has "done himself" far too well, although he may have passed as a sober man all his life, may procreate the child of poor physical, nervous, or mental stability who, badly bred, and badly led, may succumb to some worse fate than his father.

The "chronic alcoholic" is an example of a man who without any great tendency to rapid poisoning has succumbed to a bad habit. He can stop drinking if he wishes to stop. Under the stress of social and moral pressure he often does control his habit, just as the dipsomaniac often also controls his—to the extent perhaps of developing a certain periodicity in his attacks. But when we come to social groups in which the "adventure of living without the law" has been chosen, to groups which not only include the ignorant or destitute vagabond, but the class of

greater vagabonds still—the bar, billiard room, and racing loafer, the “fast” man and woman, devotees of the “gay” life—there the chronic drunkard and drug taker are always to be found, demoralized, and demoralizing those about them.

At the beginning of my service numbers of vagabond drunken women practically lived all their lives, with very short intervals of freedom, in prison. Many were in excellent physical health, and full of abounding energy. In local prisons they usually behaved well, at any rate if their sentences were short. When they became excited their whole state was so like that of drunkenness, that, if one had not known it to be impossible, one might easily have mistaken the condition for alcoholism. I have seen similar phenomena in private practice. Some were at times full of rollicking and imperturbable good temper, or if they got excited they laughed the louder. They were exceedingly suggestible and facile, could never see that they did anything wrong, and were occasionally so simply religious that it was impossible to call them hypocrites. Everything that was in their volatile minds ran out at the ends of their tongues. They were unreasonable, light-hearted, inconsequent, and incorrigible. I have no doubt that in public houses they were excellent company. Their desire, when in prison, to assert themselves and to have attention, was well marked. There was an insane strain in some of these women, and they

occasionally disappeared into an asylum for a year or so.

The light-hearted and self-assertive among these friends were often Irish, and the sweetest blessings and most dreadful curses that have descended on my Inspector's head have always come from sisters of the sister Isle. Imagination stood them all in good stead, and lightened many a monotonous round for the Inspector also. I append a few examples of their dealings with me.

My friend Rafferty was a dictatorial old woman who knew better than anyone else how everything in a prison should be done. One afternoon she greeted me kindly. "Good day to ye, lady. The angels make your bed in heaven for you. I've a complaint to make, Inspector."

I told her to say on.

*Rafferty*: "'Tis the cocoa that is the colour of slates, and not fit to drink at all."

*Inspector*: "Why, Rafferty, you are the last woman on this landing, and no one else has said anything about it."

*Rafferty*: "Come up at supper thime and hear 'em damning and cursing ut all down the landing, and sending ut to be bhurnt and them that made ut with ut."

*Inspector*: "Well, I'll go down and look at it."

*Rafferty*: "Sure it'll be arl right to-day, and them knowing you are here."

*Inspector*: "They don't know in the kitchen that I am here. Do you still want me to see it?"

*Rafferty*: "'Twill be all right to-day, I tell yez. But I haven't bheen in prison for twenty years not to know how the cocoa should be made."

*Johnson* was one of the light-hearted. I found her one morning in her cell under punishment.

*Inspector* (sternly): "What's all this about now, Johnson?"

*Johnson*: "Well, now, I'll tell ye all about it. 'Tis Card'nal Manning's burthday to-day, an' he was an old friend of mine. I got up early and cleaned me cell, so as I'd have a bit of time to pray for 'm. And I was just putting up a little 'ymn for the conversion of England, when in comes this officer and sez I was making a noise." Laughs cheerfully.

*Inspector* (eyeing prisoner severely): "You ought to drop your nonsense, Johnson."

*Johnson* (beaming): "And so I will, me lady. The holy saints guard your footsteps, and sthand betune you and all harm."

In a prison in one of the Eastern counties a handsome old tramp, with a beautiful head of white hair and the big eyes of a gazelle, complained to me that there was no Church service for Catholic prisoners. It seemed hard to her to be in prison and deprived of all, etc., etc. Couldn't I speak to the "Home Seckertary" and get something done about it?

*Inspector*: "Matron, do we get other Catholics here?"

*Matron*: "Hardly ever. There are none now."

*Inspector* (to prisoner): "By the way, you don't belong to this side of the country at all. You were in Liverpool prison a fortnight ago."

*Prisoner*: "Eh! Dr. Gordon. What a memory you have!"

*Inspector*: "How long has she got here?"

*Matron*: "Seven days."

*Inspector* (looking reflectively at the prisoner) "Aren't you an old devil?"

*Prisoner* (caught out, but unrepentant): "Eh, Dr. Gordon, it's you is the ould sport!"

But true religion appeared sometimes. An aged woman, who must have been about 80, and who could do no work, used to spend a large part of her time in prison saying her prayers. She prayed for me that I might do my inspections well. She prayed for everybody. The officer in charge told me that "Whatever time in the night you might look in on her, you might find her saying her prayers."

I shall not forget a terrible railway accident at which I was present near Liverpool, and the way in which a crowd of rough men and women, who might do nothing else, knelt outside the railings and prayed aloud together for the dying and the dead. Some of those beautifully-instructed prison friends of mine may quite well have been among them.

Drink was almost always the reason why these women came to prison, and although the foregoing are sketches of them at their best, in other

moods or circumstances they were extremely difficult to manage. Many of the worst cases found their way to certified inebriate reformatories, while these were in existence. These institutions were founded on a hypothesis of cure by detention in favourable surroundings, but from the material that presently filled them, it became evident that cure was out of the question. The most violent and unmanageable women in these institutions found their way through a process of natural selection to the State Inebriate Reformatory, where they were detained under a rule that made some allowance for their mental condition. By the time these women reached this latter Institution, often after long years of imprisonment for petty offences, and repeated acts of drunkenness, amelioration of their condition was hardly possible. They were the finished work of the bad prison system which they had come under, and their foolish, uncontrolled, degraded, and often insane behaviour when under detention, and after long periods of sobriety, showed the futility of expecting them to be able to live properly as free citizens. In the Inebriate Reformatories the dipsomaniac with tendency to paranoid psychoses was the usual type, the deteriorated chronic inebriate was less often committed.

A great opportunity was afforded in these institutions for a thorough study of the inmates, of the nature and incidence of their outbreaks,

varieties of their psychoses, and the history and progress of their state while under detention. Unfortunately a scientific study and record of these cases or their treatment was never made. In these institutions were quite young women, middle aged women, who were becoming more fixed in their enfeebled condition, and old women for whom nothing could be done. Among no prisoners were the inroads made by the unconscious upon the conscious more plainly demonstrated, among none was the dominance of complete egotistic savagery more clearly to be seen.

The histories that could be obtained of inebriate inmates of this institution showed that many of them belonged to the third or fourth generation of inebriate and degenerate stock. These women, strong, healthy, and brutal, were the survival of the fittest to survive in the worst of circumstances. The tale of the children who had died after they had borne them was appalling. Their own habits and views of life were appalling. Everything they wished to do was right, nothing that they chose to do was wrong. In spite of years of poverty, drunkenness, and prostitution, they were strong enough to be formidable fighters, and were easily roused to fight. Yet their strength was the strength of lunatics, and blended with much pitiful weakness. So inconsequent were their minds that it was often possible to ward off some violent impulse by distracting them as one might

a child. They would sometimes pass with amazing rapidity from mild discussion to the shrieking of an enraged animal, or from extreme passion back to complete docility. Such human explosives were they that even if their eccentricities became purely ludicrous it was necessary not to smile, and if they became suddenly dangerous it was necessary to be "ready for" them.

One of the best examples of outrageous changes of mood was L., a powerful woman who once, when the Governor of the Reformatory was not "ready for" her, gave him two rich black eyes. She alternated in her conduct between all that was mild and soft-voiced, and the exhibition of a ferocious bullying manner and discordant shouting. Years ago she had attained her 100th conviction, and once she passed through the State Inebriate Reformatory. On one of my visits I was warned to be careful of L., who was in one of her moods. I found her in a room alone scrubbing the floor. On seeing me she stood up, and stalking over to me, clenched her wet fist, and held it about an inch from my face.

Standing over me she addressed me, shouting :  
" Dr. Gordon, there are people—that—if I was out of this I'd *murder* 'em." She waited. It was my turn to speak. I could only catch her eye round her fist.

*Inspector* (with deliberation): " Well, L. (pause) I will say this (pause) that though you

*have* a bit of temper—you *do* control it.” (Awful pause). The fist came down and she folded her arms with the air of a tragedy queen, and said with composure, “I do.”

*Inspector*: “And very much to your credit too. And how are you to-day?” The storm had passed, and we conversed peacefully.

On another occasion I heard a torrent of “language” coming from a cell in a local prison. It was L.

*Inspector*: “Why, L. What’s up?”

L. (shouting): “It’s all that blankety doctor’s fault. He’s took me orf work. What’s he took me orf work for? Lady Gordon—you—know well—what me work is like. And he keeps me ’ere.”

*Inspector*: “What is his reason? Aren’t you well?”

L. (her voice suddenly becoming sweet and low, —and entering into explanations): “It’s the varicose veins in me legs. I ain’t had me bloody shoes on me bloody feet for a bloody fortnight. Look ’ere and see for yourself.” Sympathy expressed and harmony restored.

Once more L. wished to lodge a formal complaint with me that she had been “brutalized”—the prisoner’s technical expression for being restrained by force. “Never before ’ave they done such to me.”

*Inspector*: “Well, I suppose you came in a bit fresh, didn’t you?”

*Matron*: "We had to do it because she flew at another woman."

*Inspector*: "Oh, forget it, L. It's all over long ago."

*L.* (pensively reviewing the combat): "Well, I really didn't know what I was doing for a day or two. But (with animation) you remember them teeth they gave me at Aylesbury (she had been fitted with an artificial set) I took 'em out and handed them to the officer before I started."

*Inspector* (preserving miraculous gravity): "Well, L.—I always did say you had some self-control."

*L.* (innocently): "Me? Why I was in that kitchen for four months, and a knife in me hand every day, and never put it into nobody." Self-control indeed—in L.'s case!

L. is now getting old, and losing her fire. I always liked her.

Drink renders some women of this type dangerous to all comers, and I once found myself in a tight place with one of them. She had just been newly admitted to a small country prison, where she was well known, and had always behaved quietly.

She had taken her bath and changed her clothes, and was located in a corridor below stairs awaiting the doctor's visit. An elderly officer who was with me unlocked her cell door, and I saw the woman standing on her stool looking out of the high window. On seeing us she jumped

down, and, catching the stool, and holding it feet foremost, she charged the officer who stood in the doorway. I was inside the cell and tried to stop her, and the stool caught on the door. Dropping it, and jumping over it, she rushed into the passage, and, seizing the officer from behind, tried to put her teeth in her ear. The officer could do nothing. No signal of ours could be heard upstairs. Immediately I found myself engaged in a stiff single-handed fight. I was dressed in a thin summer silk dress with sleeves short to the elbow. I got my arm firmly under the woman's chin, and by nearly choking her dragged her off the officer. I had to prevent her twisting in my arms, and trying to bite my bare arm. We fought, hurling one another against the walls of the passage, but we were not far from the cell, and I was able to get her in and shut the door. The poor creature, besides being full of drink, had really started an attack of acute mania, and she was removed to an asylum as quickly as possible.

Men and women under tension are the most suddenly savage of all the animals, and the only way in which to meet such an accidental occurrence as this is not to be caught napping, and to show the necessary fight for the prisoner's and others' safety.

I have known this type of woman so dangerous that not fewer than four or five warders went at any time to her cell. It is perfectly obvious that a prison is no place for women of this kind,

whether for long or short periods, and that facilities should be made for their treatment elsewhere. Every pains should be taken to diagnose their real condition early in life, and to detain them in circumstances that really suit their needs. It is quite unnecessary to classify them as drunkards. The drunkenness is only one of a series of disorders consequent on their mental state.

After seeing the initial stages of this state in the younger girls, I am not disposed to call it incurable in its beginnings if thoroughly and scientifically treated. I shall refer to the condition of mind of these women in another place.

## CHAPTER V

### STREAKS OF CHARACTER

#### THE HOPEFUL

We may hope that all who come to prison will do well after their punishment. The most unlikely occasionally surprise us. Even the recidivist occasionally forsakes her follies and "turns respectable." And even the respectable, under the stress of misfortune, may give way to the folly of becoming a gaol-bird. No age is exempt from adverse experiences, and some of the older women of 40 or 50 years may need a helping hand to recovery as much as the young girl of 16. Misfortune is undoubtedly a cause of offences, and unless it is possible to give instant and effective help to the subject of it, a confirmed gaol-bird may result. Such people need a quick and experienced woman or man to get at the core of their trouble during the short time that they are under detention. Undoubtedly many are overlooked; how many I, myself, have overlooked I shall not know until the day of judgment, but among those who have told me their story and taken heart from my suggestion of their worth and value, and capacity to do well, are some few women whose stories were not known until they told them to me. Probably because they did not

tell them to anyone else. Undoubtedly great changes in the circumstances of an individual's life may upset her normal balance and plunge her among other troubles, into trouble with the police. I am convinced that among women the loss of husband, or home, or of some special work, has such a depressing effect that the loser gives way then for the first time in her life to drink, or to crime. I can only give a few cases here. The first three are cases of women who were all very happily married, and who, after the loss of their husbands, at once broke down, and got into the hands of the police.

I was inspecting once in a seaport town when I saw in her cell a woman of 40 with a clear and steady blue eye, and a rich sun-tanned complexion, who faced me squarely.

I learnt that this was her fourth offence during one year—she had no previous convictions. She had been sent to prison each time for being drunk.

I said to her: "Surely you are not a drunkard?"

She replied: "I'm here."

"Tell me your story," I said.

She told me that for some years she had been going to sea in her husband's boat. She had worked as a sailor with several other hands. Her husband died, and she was not allowed to sail her boat, and had to sell it. "Since I have been ashore," she said, "I have done no good."

"You're not a drunkard?"

"Well, I always liked it, but I never took it at sea. But I simply *can't live* ashore."

I told her that it was a great shame that she could not go to sea, as I was sure she was a good sailor. I said she was too good to come to prison, and quite clever enough to get a living. She had a little money, and I suggested that she should go down to the docks and set up a stall or eating-place for the men, and live on the edge of the salt water. She said she would. She never came back to prison.

On another occasion I noticed a superior, nicely-spoken woman in prison. I forget her offence. I said to her: "What are you doing here? You are not the sort we see here. What is the matter with you?" Her story was that she had once been in a good position, and had owned a house, and a business. Just as she was prospering she fell in love with and married a labouring man, her social inferior. They lost the business and had many misfortunes. Finally they "tramped the roads." Then the husband died, and after that she got into the hands of the police.

"Ah," I said, sympathetically, "you did badly for yourself over your marriage."

"No," she said, "I didn't. I don't regret one day of it. Wherever we were, I was perfectly happy. Now I have lost him I don't know what to do—I can't get on."

Here again I suggested to her that she could get on better than this. She promised to take heart and try. She never came again to prison.

Here is yet a third story of the tragedy of widowhood. A certain working woman of the street-seller class was sent to the State Inebriate Reformatory as an incorrigible drunkard. She behaved well and quietly there, and improved in health but was very rheumatic.

After her discharge, unknown to her, I provided her with a basket for selling flowers. About a year afterwards she called at my house in Harley Street, and left me a bunch of violets and a message that she had kept perfectly straight.

After two years more, I strolled one evening, about 9 p.m., into a public building where a suffrage meeting was in progress. A woman beckoned me to a vacant chair. When the speeches were over, she turned to me and said: "I see you don't know me, Dr. Gordon." I did not. She told me who she was. "But," I said, looking at her good clothes and general appearance, "how nice you look." "Yes," she said, "in spite of this (showing me her hands crippled with rheumatism) I've got on all right. These ladies let me sell flowers at their meetings, and are very kind to me. I've never had a drop since I left Aylesbury."

I asked her: "Then do tell me why did you ever drink?"

She replied: "It wasn't the drink, Dr. Gordon.

I was just out of me mind when I lost my husband, and that's why I took it. At Aylesbury I got better, and I've never wanted it again. That's all."

It was true that this woman in spite of her unstable nervous system, and with the handicap of her crippled hands, had taken up life again, and a hard life, and was doing well.

It was from the streets of London, that an epic of marriage was sung to me in a London prison. The woman who sang it in fresh canticles, every time I saw her, was also a flower seller, and a habitual and so-called feeble-minded drunkard. I never saw "Him," but feel that I know him well. She told me that they had lived from childhood in the same house, and when they were seventeen had married. She said that he was called feeble-minded. She had been coming to prison for about twenty years. When I first knew her she never came to prison very drunk, but officers who had known her for more years than I had said that formerly she had come in filthy, shouting, and fighting every time. In this she had improved. She was excitable and unstable, but had a lot of good in her. Her husband did very much as she did, but they wrote each other affectionate letters from their respective prisons. Once they did not meet for four years, as they could not manage to be out of prison at the same time. But he was her only thought. Finally, while she was serving three years in the State

Inebriate Reformatory, he was sent to a lunatic asylum. She wrote to me a few years later, and begged to be sent to Lady Henry Somerset's Home which was near the Asylum. She was sent, and stayed a year, behaving well. She visited her husband, a hopelessly deteriorated lunatic, who did not know her. But she was delighted to see him, and would have stayed for ever in the Home on the chance of other visits.

When she was obliged to leave the Home she fell at once into prison again. She felt I would be disappointed in her, and used to cry, or run away and hide, when I came round. Her husband soon died, but still her talk was all of him. She told me with a sort of wonder that they had always been faithful to one another.

In the years that I knew her she developed and improved. She will never cease to come to prison while she has strength to get there, but I think when she gets to a world where there is no drink, and no imprisonment, that she will unfold a growing soul, kept alive by a very beautiful love—a thread of gold in a dark record.

I am afraid my attempts to help prisoners were unconventional—but I used to ask them what, if they could choose it, would keep them out of prison, and I found that acting on their reply produced results.

In one prison a good-looking young woman, who was an able factory-worker, but whose

temper was said to be very bad, was perpetually coming to prison, and I was told that the prison visitors were almost tired of trying to help her.

I noticed that she had a very pronounced dark beard on her chin.

I took her into a room alone, and asked her to tell me the trouble. She said there was none. I said, "Yes there is, and it's those hairs on your chin." She broke down and wept, and said that it was the trouble, and that people were so unkind to her, that she had become very quarrelsome, and could not keep her work. I suggested the obvious thing, that she should shave it. Although she had been so miserable, she had never thought of this. I went to the Governor, who promised me that she should have a safety razor. She came once more to prison on account of her temper (possibly her friends had congratulated her unduly), but after that never came again.

I came across another young woman who was continually in prison for stealing men's clothes. She had several long sentences. I asked her what would keep her out of prison, and she replied: "If I could go to sea." On investigation I found that she felt it impossible to live as a woman, but could live as a man, and enjoyed men's work.

I told her that there was no law against her wearing men's clothing decently, if she did not steal it. After she had had two more convictions, I fitted her out with the clothes she wanted, and

paid her fare to South Wales. She got work in a night shift, and lay on her back in a coal-pit hewing coal. All the year she did well, and wrote that she was living respectably. In her letter she said : " This is the first Easter for ten years that I have spent out of prison." She suffered many severe vicissitudes, including a mental attack, but came to prison very little in after years. To make useful citizens out of lost vagabonds cannot be done on prejudice of any kind.

In all the above cases of prisoners, sympathetic and scientific investigation of their individual needs must have led to better results than the hasty repeated imprisonments they received. If a case of this kind had to be sent to prison, once should have sufficed.

I have always felt a profound sympathy with the woman of the roads, who gets her living, God knows how, in God's open air, generally in country places. She is often not less dishonest or immoral than others. But she is different. She is civil and pleasant to speak to, and nearly always cheerful, a very small joke will light in her a merry eye. She can pitch tales and blarney you, in her capacity of story-teller or poet, which you should appreciate—but she never tells lies in essentials. And it is immensely to her credit that she cannot live in a slum, but can bear a good deal of her own society happily upon the road. Like primitive man she can work in

spurts. She can usually do a good day's work at strawberry-picking, pea-picking, hop-picking, or gathering potatoes. She has skill in making clothes-pegs and other useful things, and, if she gets enough of the material for nothing, can make a profit on it. I have never yet had time to hear all the tales that I know she can tell. One day I must pursue her on the road, and hear more. I could speak of many road women, but must only tell here of two.

One spring in a country prison I found a tall, wrinkled woman with a rich brown face. In the button-hole of her serge prison dress she wore a cowslip.

*Inspector*: "You're dressed up! Where did you get that?"

*Prisoner* (smiling): "It came up betwixt two stones in the yard."

*Inspector* (thinking aloud to herself): "Yes, and of course *you* and not the other women got it."

*Matron*: "Yes, and she oughtn't to have it." (A prisoner may have nothing).

*Prisoner* (reading encouragement in the Inspector's eye): "It don't look so well on this yer brown as it will on your green—no—you keep it, lady, it looks nice on you." (Puts it in the Inspector's coat).

*Inspector*: "Well thank you very much. They don't grow in London." And then the prisoner and the Inspector looked first at the cowslip and

then at each other, and the prisoner said : " Oh, me ! I know where they grow."

If you know it in that way you are liable to get a lump in your throat when you think of it. It was the same with the Inspector.

In this same prison was a poor old tramp, who was very ill with heart-disease. She would not go to the workhouse, and was always being sent to prison. Every argument was used to try to get her to stop in the Infirmary. As she was about to be discharged, I added what persuasion I could.

*Inspector*: " Why, you've no strength at all. You wouldn't get a mile out of the town before the police would have you. Why do you try to go on the road when you know you can't do it?"

*Prisoner*: " Well, lady, if I have the luck to be out a couple of days I might die under a hedge, and if I'd rather do that than under any roof in the world, why mayn't I?" Why, indeed?

The road is not always looked on as an honourable profession. If I asked one of these women if she could sew, she usually replied : " Oh, yes, ma'am, I've not always been on the road."

The road woman is often a rogue, but I suspect her of fleeing not from, but towards life—suffering less, and preserving her sanity better than she could do in the streets of towns.

I met an adventurer not long ago who was doing a smart sentence for deceiving a whole adult country family by the use of unauthorized

means for removing a "spell" they were under. Her own spells were very simple, and included giving them small bags of ashes to wear, and making the classic sign that keeps off the evil eye. She told me all about it, herself tremendously amused, notwithstanding that the police had deprived her of a rich haul of money and goods obtained from her grateful patients. Her eyes danced as she related the adventure.

*Inspector:* "And did the police get . . . ?" But this tale must end here. She was an able romancer, and it would not be safe to infer that they did—or did not.

Wild things have always had my sympathy. Indeed, I could have wished, for all these captives, that real nearness to nature that would have kept them from the net of the police.

I think other people sometimes get the little thrill of joy that I do, when some prisoner "gets away." It is perhaps a measure of our feeling that the prison would have done nothing for the fugitive.

Once I was in a town where a man who had been committed for trial escaped on the morning when he should have been tried. In the afternoon I met the judge who was seeing over the prison. He said: "Well—that fellow has got clean away." I said (really without thinking of what I was saying): "I'm so glad." "What!" said the judge, severely, "His Majesty's Inspector *glad* when a prisoner escapes from

justice?" "Yes," I said, stoutly, "I am." The judge looked cautiously round about him. "Don't tell anybody," he whispered, "but *so am I*."

Of course, I sometimes meet ex-prisoners, although I never recognize them unless they speak to me, or silently push me into a seat in an underground train, or the like. I know that in most circumstances they had better not be seen speaking to one whose acquaintance is as little guarantee of respectability as mine. But we meet in strange places, and I have been waited on in a friend's house by one such old acquaintance.

Once, on a summer holiday, I was riding my bicycle in the remote valley of Langdale, when, at a corner, a cart in which were three hawkers, turned into the road in front of me.

They must have been quick to recognize me. As I rode close behind them down an incline, a golden-haired girl turned round, and, fixing her eyes on my face, gave me a slow and significant wink. There was no mistaking its meaning. Of course no official with one shred of personal dignity could have dreamed of acknowledging such a salute, much less of returning it in kind. Although I will at once admit there have been incidents in my incoherent past. . . . Well, she was a free citizen, and I was on leave. The wind was on the heath, and Red Tape was many miles away—and—I don't know—I may have done.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE YOUNG PROSTITUTE

A cynical Frenchwoman once said : "*Plus je connais les hommes, plus j'aime les chiens.*" I do not say so myself, not that I love man less, but that I love dogs more. The dog is above and apart from all criticisms and comparisons. He is perfect. When I feel pessimistic I think of a description once given me by a zoologist of a family of anthropoid apes which he met in an African forest. The mother carried her little one, while the father led and looked after one a size larger. Another, older still, ran with them. My informant said : "These creatures are so faithful to one another, and take care of their young so beautifully, that they are an example to human beings." So that when man fails one, some slight consolation may be had from thoughts of brother ape—the chimpanzee.

The beliefs of a man about his nature, possibilities and destiny, colour to a great degree his beliefs about sex. Sex, in its turn, reacts upon his beliefs. As a thinking being he must adopt some theory or another of himself and his community on which to base his personal and social conduct.

For instance, if he is a primitive savage and a

member of some vigorous, self-contained tribe, his beliefs in the control of himself may be immense. He makes drastic laws on the subject of sexual relations, and sometimes put to death the man or woman whose conduct has departed from what the tribe has laid down. The safety and survival of the corporate body is all important. The savage tribe is the last body in the world to sanction the mere claims of undirected instinct. Notwithstanding which, the savage is a good deal of a man, and the kind of law-maker who sees to it that his laws are kept. The member who inaugurates a group of his own fancy form of morality as against the belief of the majority, may have to flee for his life or may perish with despatch.

If a man belongs to a highly civilised nation, which is too strong and stable to be in fear of overthrow, sub-groups of people with variant desires and theories of their own spring up, and within a large community, conduct varies as instinct is less sternly controlled. Civilized man may do and think very much more what he pleases than uncivilized man. He may not, however, make appeal to the conduct of the dog, the chimpanzee, or the savage in justification of his own.

Morality represents for him the crystallized experiences of his community through bygone ages, and it is immensely powerful, influencing the whole body, and having for its individual

members the validity of instinct. It is implicit in the laws made by the community, every law touching an instinct at some point. Whatever the size or status of the community or herd, community or herd morality is a whole and coherent thing. The moral findings of a sub-group however powerful, indeed, however right and useful, is always subservient to that of the whole community, which is, in the last resort, imperative on the social conscience.

The sub-group may bring enlightenment and may, in the end, impress itself on, and weld itself with herd belief. On the other hand it may bring inexperienced and parochial thinking to support its claims, and may demand for crude instinct undirected by wisdom, and uncontrolled by deep feeling, an amount of expression incompatible with corporate, or indeed with individual health and happiness.

When a majority hold strong and fixed opinions, the position of a minority is never a very happy one, and this is the case of the supporters of what is known as the "double" moral standard. The laws of our land are against this minority, and public opinion of the main herd is against it, and few voices are lifted up in public defence of it. It is deprecated and discouraged. The direction and control of the sex instinct is recognized as necessary to human health and happiness. The ill regard of the community extends itself, therefore, to the licentious as well

as to the gluttonous, drunken, thievish or quarrelsome man. His attitude is only tolerated in sub-groups of less responsible thinkers, and his conduct in more or less hidden circumstances.

But so "mixed" does sub-group morality become under the difficulties and stresses of modern life that there exist people who see in prostitution a provision of nature, or a step forward in evolution. Whatever may be the road on which man travels from chaos to coherence in directing his social and personal life, it should be remembered that prostitution is not the opposite of, or only alternative to continence.

But prostitution is an indication of an irrational explosion of forces that should be available for the welfare of the community. Its painful, degrading, and destructive results are too apparent for any reasonable man who knows the facts to defend its existence as a social ordinance. Nevertheless, if anything so inherently squalid and unprosperous can be said to flourish, it flourishes, and produces countless mental conflicts and neuroses in members of the herd.

Into the social structure which contains the huge paradox of the double standard, which makes its appeal in the line of least resistance through prostitution, are born millions of girls and boys whose education for their future, and initiation into the duties and destinies of adult life, are, in their degree, far inferior to those of the savage or of the anthropoid ape.

Educators often tell us that it is useless to waste our time on adults, who are too old to change their ways, or reform their ideals, and that we should concentrate upon the young and teachable. There appears to be an almost limitless belief in the teachability of the young, and an equally limitless belief in the incorrigibility of adults. The prostitution of the young is, however, the affair of the adults. There is never a time when age cannot and ought not to consider youth. The adult can consider his own life. The young man cannot consider what he has not yet lived, and, indeed, is better not scanning the example of his elders too closely.

A child has many defects due to his being a child, but he is not a fool, and he is frequently hurt and scandalized beyond measure when he finds that those who brought him up do not practise what they preach.

Disillusionment, as it is well named, inflicts great injuries on countless numbers of children, who bear it as best they may, and readjust their growing ideals to it as best they can. A child forgives those in authority over him for much, and when his own time of stress comes, is ready to forgive himself. But the child had no hand in making the laws, customs, ideals, or religion into which he was born, and the time for his contribution to herd-opinion is barely beginning in his adolescent period. His fate is partially made for him. The great reason for the existence of the

young delinquent, and equally for the promising citizen, is the example of his parents, and of any sub-group to which he belongs. No matter what his poverty of surroundings, if his lot is cast in a clean home and good school, he will submit to his teaching. Almost any parent will claim as much for his powers as a parent. If the child is really prejudiced in favour of decent and honourable living he will react to what is taught him. Such a boy or girl does not become early in life a seducer or a prostitute. But there is no such certainty for the child of the stupid, careless, or ignorant parent in any class, (no children are less protected than some in the upper classes) while the child of the vagabond parent has practically no chance at all. The last-named child will react to the influences under which he grows up, and may easily make, as his first and last choice, as his elders have done, "the adventure of living without the law." He will do as they do,—as much as possible of what he pleases. There is little need to go farther than this in seeking the first causes of the young delinquent. They lie, first in the current morality of his group, and then in the sowing of those who came before him, which he reaps in due course.

Our young prostitute is one of these unprotected adolescents. The great majority of young girls who are committed to prison, "being common prostitutes," are between sixteen and twenty-one or twenty-two years of age. They

come from many social grades. Some run away from home, and go on the streets at an early age. This latter class are often impulsive and mentally abnormal, but always really ill-protected. I found that their reasons for escaping from home were not by any means always in order that they might practise prostitution. They often had a grievance or a quarrel at home—in my experience more often with the father than with the mother. So violent at times is the partisanship of the child for one parent whom she may consider ill-used, and so much trouble does she make in the home between her parents, that both are often glad to be rid of her.

In reviewing these cases I often met with exceedingly sad stories of clandestine loose living from 14 onwards, or seduction, desertion, disgrace, fear of returning home, gratitude to the helping hand of the exploiter, prostitution.

I have seen beautiful and respectably reared English, Scotch, or Irish girls brought to London and deserted there, who could think of no way out of their difficulties except through prostitution. Foreign girls, beguiled with promises of paying situations, also got into their first trouble in this country. I saw one little German girl who had come straight from a country farm to a London lodging-house, and knew no English. She was paid no wages. When she began to make trouble over this, a watch was put under her pillow and found there, and she was handed to the

police and remanded for theft. After serving a sentence for such an offence she would be deported by the authorities, and that would close all embarrassment for her late employers.

I heard many stories of betrayal, but the story was hardly ever concerned with a boy of the girl's own age, it usually concerned a much older, or a married man. Such tales came truthfully, with tears—in prison, and were often brought to my notice, or corroborated by sympathetic officers. We met these girls when they were just on the edge, or had just gone over the edge of prostitution; and their wrongs, their mistakes, their wilfulness, and their helpless plight excited the compassion of every older woman who saw them.

Although some girls were originally or newly from respectable homes, and others were blatant and flashy individuals who were at the moment flourishing, the great majority were very poor and ignorant, and came from the labouring classes. Some were too poor and ignorant to be low or vulgar. Some were precocious gutter-snipes far from ignorant, but with an under-stratum of almost innocence. There were many pathetic little thieves of underclothing, who had literally hardly any covering necessary for warmth and decency under their outer dress. Many of these were little servant "slaveys" who got hardly any wages, and dozens of these became thieves before they became prostitutes, stealing money or clothes to outfit themselves for this means of livelihood.

There were clever, nimble, young vagabonds among them who would presently become the tools of coiners, forgers or receivers, but who had only their virtue to give in payment for their apprenticeship to crime.

I often warned these young thieves of what would happen to them, and no doubt so did the police and other people. But their fate was their fate, and I saw many go through every phase of imprisonment, and "fetch up" occasionally, still dreaming of the fairy prince and life of a "lady," in the convict prison.

Undeveloped wisps of girls would tell me of visits with other girls or older women to public houses, of their introduction to men, of their envy of the "gay life," of their desire to seem grown up, of their submission to tattooing (their baptism into the gay life), of too much drink, and of all the consequences. But the most hardened street-girls often ended their story with: "If I had been older." "If I hadn't been such a fool."

As regards the wages of the "gay life," for the girls I came across they were very low. They varied from a pennyworth of sweets or a glass of beer, to a cheap fur coat, fine box of chocolates, or night in some hotel. Few had any decent clothes. Robbery from the person was perhaps their most profitable adventure. Some were really destitute vagrants. For instance:—*Inspector* (to young girl who had been a skilled photographer's assistant, and was often arrested for sleeping

out): "What do you get for it?" *Girl*: "Not much." *Inspector*: "As much as sixpence?" *Girl*: "Oh, no—I never get sixpence."

Some, like this girl, were delicate, anæmic little things, half-starved, unclean, and verminous, and frequented dark places. One such case came into prison bruised by stones that had been thrown at her by her clients.

Some of the more sober, vigorous, and enterprising young women get money by making men drunk and robbing them. For some of their adventures they go in fear of their lives, and often travel to another end of the country in order to avoid the revenge of their victims. They have other reasons for changing their places of residence, and I met the same girls in widely distant prisons. They are very cautious, and change their names every time they are sent to prison, less from fear of the police and prison authorities, who quickly recognize them, than from fear of betrayal by other prisoners. These are the girls who accept money for decoying and entrapping others. But the Dorotheys and Gladys's would always tell the Inspector their real name for the asking.

Hundreds of girls in seaport towns frequent docks, wharves, and ships. Where docks are not enclosed they cannot be kept out, and in any case there are more ways of reaching a ship than from the wharf. According to the stories of the girls it is often with the cognizance of the captain that

they go on coasting ships or fishing vessels for short voyages. Some go for a month or two months at a time. Until every captain, British or foreign, is made responsible for the persons on his ship there appears to be no remedy for this. A woman can quickly and easily disappear in this way from a town or country she has made "too hot to hold her." I recently met in prison a girl of 17, who had been thirteen times to France and back, spending a few days in port each time. No doubt foreign women appear, and re-appear after deportation in this way, in this and other countries. This movement of women, unchallenged by the police from country to country at a time when honest people were wrestling with the authorities over passports, shows how dangerous, in war time, such free passages of persons hidden in ships might be.

A few months before war broke out, I noticed several girls in prison professing to be Scandinavians, who had names in German script tattooed on their arms.

Some of the most vicious and degraded girls are voluble talkers about their own affairs. I recently interviewed one who was suffering on admission to prison from the effects of cocaine. She took large quantities, and satisfied the thirst it produced with neat whiskey. She described herself as a "terrible drunkard." I have never met a more poisonous individual in mind and soul. She detailed her life and habits to me in

the argot of her class, and boasted acquaintance with a notorious woman who had died of similar excesses. She had run away from home at 14, and had been on the streets ever since. Her state of health was so bad, that I judged she would probably not live much longer. She was 17 years old.

Some young girls who had been much knocked about, came on remand for observation as to their state of mind. I saw one or two who moved in a stony, automatic, expressionless way, and seemed only to come to the surface when questioned, but otherwise to be absorbed in dreaming. Some, when set going, romanced in the most remarkable way—I judged them to be suffering from extreme nervous exhaustion with hysteric psychoses, but some may have been early cases of dementia præcox. I noted that girls who had become prostitutes at a very early age were not only exhausted and neurasthenic, but often appeared to remain infantile in voice and appearance as though their development had been cut short. Probably violent interference with their endocrine system had contributed to this result. Syphilis, in some of these cases, appeared to run a fulminating course. Hysteria, which is a serious and dangerous illness, is very common among them, and when sent to prison for long periods they bear the strain badly. I have known their condition lead to self-mutilation with permanent injuries, or to risk or loss of the girl's life. Every

extreme of unfortunate, almost childish, girl can be seen in prison, sometimes innocent enough, sometimes far from it, yet ignorant of all that is life.

Thus:—*Inspector* (to a young girl of sixteen betrayed by a married man and about to become a mother): “You wouldn’t say it was right to do as you did, would you?”

*Girl* (looking up sadly in *Inspector’s* face): “No—but it seemed so then.”

*Inspector* (to young French girl, to whom had been explained the great dangers of her life): “You know you will soon find these earnings at an end?”

*Girl*: “Well, Madame, if I practise such a dangerous trade, it is, at any rate, right that I should be well paid.”

The rescue of these girls from their worst circumstances is not as difficult as is generally supposed. No doubt it is a gift to touch them in a way that will influence them. Conventional methods never succeed, but there are prison lady visitors who have the gift, and have a good harvest of sheaves to show for their pains.

Rescuing prisoners was not the *Inspector’s* work, and I never took a hand with any discharged prisoners unless they had been pronounced incorrigible by other people. Sometimes the very energy, enterprise, and hunger for a wider life which they have satisfied at such a cost, will urge them on to a better. Personally,

I got some of my best results by twitting them with their lack of independence, the very quality they thought they had been showing. During the war I had an interesting experience. Commandant Damer Dawson and Sub-Commandant Allen of the Women's Police Service, went with me one day to a prison to recruit war workers for factories. We had in about a dozen of the most incorrigible girls the prison then contained. We announced that it was a "man to man" talk, and everyone was to say exactly what she liked. We sat round a long table alone together.

*Inspector* (closing some very pointed remarks about people who were slaves): "You girls are called prostitutes. That means a woman who lowers herself. Such women are despised by all decent people. Why, even black savages despise people who live your life. You never know anybody nice. People don't want their sons and daughters to know you. And what do you get by it? Even the men who call you little darlings and buy and sell you, and joke about you behind your backs—despise you. They give you diseases, but they don't marry you. They inform against you, and make laws that send you to prison. They take good care not to send themselves there. You have all seen the old women in this prison who began as you began, and have been coming here ever since. Is that life? And *you* go on coming here like the set of silly sheep you are! Only one life, and living it in that rotten way!"

Silence, and an interval in which girls move round the table and whisper together.

*Worst Girl* (taking position as leader): "Well, what can you do?"

*Inspector*: "Do? Why go to work and serve your country, instead of sitting in rows in A2 and Dx (prison wings) eating food that other people pay for. What better are you than Germans—enemies of your country?"

*A Girl*: "We can't get work."

*Commandant Damer Dawson*: "Won't—you mean. There is work for every one of you, if you'll go to it, and stick to it honourably. I'll get it for you."

More whispered conversation and arguments.

*A Girl*: "Some of us won't be out of here for weeks longer. Will you meet us when we come out?"

*Commandant Damer Dawson*: "No, I won't. You all know where to find me. We are talking man to man. You must make your own free choice."

*Inspector*: "Why, you're not a crowd of kids. You know your way about. Why should anybody come and fetch you?"

Odd as it may appear, the refusal to meet them on their discharge was our master-stroke. They were feeling thoroughly inferior, and at this point their feeling of power and independence woke up. Several on their discharge went straight to the offices of the munitions police, and allowed

themselves to be helped and sent to honest work. If we had had time, and it had been our job, we could have got numbers of them to go to work.

It would be impossible to relate here the cruel circumstances of some of these girls' lives, or to describe the flippancy, vulgarity, greed, and indecency of their outlook and conversation, or to do more than refer to the revolting communications they receive which pass as "love letters" which corrupt their minds and contribute to their ruin. The only repeatable sentence in one of these sent to a very ignorant girl runs : " Oh, what a dear little devil you are. Not a perfect devil yet though ! " These letters, with their enjoinder to secrecy, are a fit accompaniment to the life of the double standard.

Anyone who knows the truth about the lives of these poor girls, who are not protected sufficiently by the law, but are pulled or pushed by every sort of bad circumstance and selfish human being, before they are of an age to realize their folly, into an existence of vice and crime, holds a strong opinion upon the state of society which permits this wholesale ruin of the potential mothers of our nation.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE MAKING OF THE COMMON PROSTITUTE

The invincible ignorance of some young prisoners, and their inability to defend themselves against their enemies, among whom the law is often one, is typified by a girl whom I saw on remand, not long ago.

*Inspector* (to girl): "Tell me what you did?"

*Girl*: "I never solicited anyone. I've never done it in my life."

*Inspector*: "Did you tell the magistrate that?"

*Girl*: "No."

*Inspector*: "Why not?"

*Girl*: "The policeman told me it would be better for me not to say anything."

*Inspector*: "Why, it was the policeman who arrested you? He wasn't your friend. He was against you."

*Girl*: "Well, I didn't know what to do. That's what he said."

*Inspector*: "Well, you are a stupid girl. When you go to the court *defend* yourself. Ask what proof there is besides the policeman's word. Say you didn't do it, if you didn't, and stick to it. Matron, has this child's mother been to see her?" etc., etc.

The routine warning given to prisoners on arrest that anything they say may be used in evidence against them, is over and over again interpreted by them as meaning that they had better not deny their offence. "He said I would only get it worse if I said I didn't do it," is their interpretation of the warning, and it must be owned that it is not an unnatural interpretation of words that appear to have two meanings.

Girls on remand and elderly women, too, have often said to me : "Oh ! I should be frightened to speak up in a police court." "I always feel when I get there that I can't speak a word." If fifty years of age often finds itself speechless, so does 16 or 18 years of age.

All cases ought to be defended in court, and not allowed through ignorance, or fear, to admit their offence, or to fail to defend themselves. One can imagine what sort of a "show" one would have put up oneself in a police court at 16 or 18 ! The humanity of all concerned in investigating such cases of petty offence is undoubted, but my experiences convinced me that the invincible ignorance, or stupidity, or stupefaction of people unaccustomed to thinking, or to police court procedure, the one factor which, if more realized would enable justice to be done, does not always get its due.

Let us look at the legal process by which a woman or girl becomes a common prostitute. It is a complicated matter, which, however, should

be understood by citizens who have made, or have accepted it.

To be a prostitute, or a "common prostitute" is not an offence under the law, and nobody can be punished for it. Under the Vagrancy Act of 1824 "Every common prostitute wandering in the public streets or highways or in any place of public resort and behaving in a riotous or indecent manner," can be punished by a month's imprisonment.

The Vagrancy Act has, for nearly a century, proved itself in many particulars a good and useful measure. It came into force at a time when many violent and dangerous characters prowled about the country, and when it was found necessary to put down disorder with a strong hand. It provided for the punishment of many kinds of vagabondage. It also provided increasing penalties which, if used, would have minimised the enormous number of short convictions which now obtain.

It dealt, among other offenders, with women, who, being common prostitutes, were guilty of riotous or indecent conduct, that is conduct which, when seen or heard, could not fail to excite the indignation of ordinary citizens. It provided that two credible witnesses should support the charge. It not only allowed any person to arrest, but it provided penalties for constables who failed to do their duty in apprehending the offender. No doubt constables were

as glad then, as other citizens are now to look the other way whenever they could, and thank Heaven they were rid of a knave.

Credible witness is now taken to mean the evidence of the police only.

The Vagrancy Act formed the basis of subsequent enactments and was further developed in the Metropolitan Police Act of 1839, thus:—  
“Every common prostitute or night walker loitering or being in any thoroughfare or public place for the purpose of prostitution or solicitation to the annoyance of the inhabitants or passengers,” may be fined £2, or sent to prison in default. The Town Clauses, Police Act, and various town by-laws have provisions to the same effect. Now being in a place for a purpose is a very vague charge, when a woman is merely walking about, or occasionally addressing a fellow creature. Possibly if you find a man outside a dwelling at night with a set of burglar’s tools on him, you are justified in inferring that he is loitering for an unlawful purpose—but a fine hat and a painted face or anything else, cannot disclose to you a woman’s purpose in loitering in a street, or be a proof of her offence. She must be intending to solicit, or soliciting *to the annoyance of the inhabitants*—and that is the offence which requires proof. If there is any annoyance of inhabitants or passengers that annoyance is not now expressed at first hand. The only accusers are one, or two, policemen. They do not call

the inhabitants or passengers as witnesses. They do not call them for a very good reason, viz., that, as a rule, they would deny having been annoyed, and would not come to give evidence.

However, the main feature about these laws is that they are only enforceable against a *common prostitute*. Other kinds of prostitutes, as well as respectable women, may loiter in public places, and may be and sometimes are (very much to their annoyance) arrested by mistake. Any other women, except common prostitutes, may accost men, may both purpose to solicit, and do so, but these laws do not apply to them. To be a prostitute is not an offence.

Yet the "*common prostitute*," by being something which it is not an offence to be, can commit offences which other women cannot commit, and can be brought to the court without the testimony of any annoyed person, and sent to prison on the witness of the police. But how does a woman *become* a "common prostitute"? She becomes one by the simple process of the policeman moving her on, probably telling her she is one, warning her he will arrest her, and finally arresting her, swearing in court that she is one, and that she has loitered with the intention of soliciting, or that he has seen her soliciting. After that she is eligible for punishment and takes her place in the ranks of "common prostitutes." The law, as at present administered, puts the fate of all women at the mercy of the unsupported testi-

mony of the police. The question arises what would be the result of requiring one or two credible witnesses from among the inhabitants or passengers of a locality, and of punishing the woman for her real offence (if she had committed annoyance) regardless of what the policeman has to say about her character or motives. The answer is that such women would never be arrested at all.

All men and women who travel, or go about in towns and public places, are liable to annoyance. Hundreds in any locality are liable to solicit or be solicited. The annoyed can usually take good care of themselves, and stop the annoyance. If they cannot, they have their remedy. But it should be remembered that everyone who is addressed or solicited is not annoyed. Some are amused, or flattered, or pleased to form a friendship—we have all formed friendships in our time from equally casual beginnings. Police espionage on, or special attention to women of this class is unnecessary. The arresting constable cannot run the risk of apprehending and accusing any woman except the despised and friendless woman who can put up little or no defence.

Under the above laws thousands of girls and young women are arrested and punished.

No doubt many of these are prostitutes, and are wild, uncontrolled vagabonds, victims in the first instance of bad circumstances of every kind. No

doubt they have been deaf to counsel, and defiant of all warnings. But we should protect before we punish them. And we should punish justly. Nothing is more pitiful than to see a girl at 16 or 17 years of age committed as "prostitute—soliciting" or as "riotous," "indecent," or "drunken prostitute." Once branded with the name, the girl's chances of a respected life or honest employment are often over. She is practically, to use a common phrase, "ruined," and bankrupt of all character. A girl of rough upbringing and surroundings may be, just as a lad may be, punished for being riotous, indecent, or drunken, and may recover from it, as from a youthful indiscretion, but the brand *common prostitute* is not so easily lived down. Such a woman is a woman always under the scrutiny of the police, easily pounced on. Other people are ready to blackmail, accuse or punish her, or to exploit and tempt her to criminal acts, when once her caste is proclaimed.

I have no hesitation in saying that the existing laws not only condemn these girls to, but keep them in their hideous bondage, hall-marked as a degraded and outcast class.

The deletion of the epithet "common prostitute" from all laws where it is now written, would empty the prisons of hundreds of women, and the State coffers of a large sum in fines, for they could not be arrested on the simple nature of their offence. The reclamation of many would

then be an easier matter, and real disorder could still be dealt with effectively by other means.

As regards public order, as a rule prostitution is most rife where public order is the best. The prostitute's best market is in the populous, well-lighted, well-patrolled thoroughfare or public place. Anyone who will go and observe such a street can see solicitation occurring in the face of the inhabitants and passengers, and under the eye of the policeman. The policeman certainly does not hear the spoken word, and can hardly act on the significant look, dropped handkerchief, raised hat, glad eye, or the innumerable other trade signs which initiate negotiations. As a matter of fact, in most of such affairs there is no disorder at all, and there is little loitering if passengers are kept moving.

Little can be done in outlying dark and less populous localities, except through the agency of detectives, and everyone who is out at night knows what some of these localities are like, indeed, what the turnings off the well-lighted streets are like. Much more light, and much more patrolling of our towns would be necessary if all streets were to be kept fit for inhabitants and passengers to enjoy. But the chase and arrest of a small handful of girls and women as common prostitutes accomplishes nothing except sealing them for their avocation.

I have said that, before we punish, we should protect our young, and I now turn to this ques-

tion. In this country the protection of a young person, or young adolescent, is practically very small, and although it is doubtless good that such young people should, as soon as possible, learn to manage their own lives, there seems to be no good reason, while they are doing so, why they should not enjoy a measure of protection from the grosser forms of exploitation.

In our towns, as soon as a girl can support herself she can go into lodgings and live as she pleases. There are thousands of such girls whose parents cannot, at any rate do not, invoke the assistance of the State in exercising further control over them. I have met them in prison at the age of 18, convicted of "brothel keeping." In France the boy or girl who wishes to leave the parental roof to go to work, must appear before a magistrate and take out papers of emancipation. There are things that the emancipated may not do, and he is on a string, and may be drawn home again if he lives badly.

Again, in France, every child without a father must have a legal guardian. The French father's authority is well upheld by the State. The State will not punish or control his child for him, but will assist him to do so, and he himself can put the child under detention and remove him again.

Girls are protected from sexual interference, and may not marry without their parents' consent until of a responsible age, but they may marry by

When the representatives of the Medical Women's Federation gave evidence before the Conjoint Parliamentary Committee on the Criminal Law Amendment Bill, they set forth their views on a reasonable "age of consent." They argued that at 14 years old a girl should not be able under the law to consent to acts of indecency which are in essence only the preliminaries to the whole sexual act, and inevitably lead there. They argued that at 16 a girl was little more than a child, soft in tissue, not yet physically grown or developed, emotionally unstable, without judgment or full knowledge of what "consent" involved, and unable to support any child that she might bear.

They thought a reasonable and proper age until which a boy or girl could wait for intercourse was 18.<sup>1</sup> They saw nothing against marriages from the age of 16 under due and proper safeguards.

They expressed the opinion that it was unnecessary to regulate the relations of boys and girls by law, and that the prostitution of young

<sup>1</sup> As a matter of fact, although thousands of girls have intercourse under the age of 18 there are hardly any marriages under that age.

Undoubtedly the difficulties in the way of early marriages are often great, but this makes it the more, not less, necessary that young women should have due protection. The difficulties, however, are not as insurmountable as often appears. A man who is spending money on women cannot be saving it for his future home. In the more prosperous classes the selfishness of their parents prevents many young men from marrying early. Many a man has to wait long years, earning very little, for an inheritance which will enable him to live more comfortably and support a family, when his parents, with due economy, could have helped him earlier in life. This is a source of prostitution which simpler living in general would remove. It does not, in any case, apply to working-class men who expect

no inheritance, and whose best earning years are often in early life. But the example of the well-to-do young man in enjoying himself in the line of least resistance, shirking responsibility, and having his fling, no doubt assists in maintaining the easier double standard in all classes, a certain number of the poorer women paying the price. But if parents and law-makers are little moved by consideration for the future mothers and fathers of the race, venereal disease takes its toll from thousands of boys and girls, a large number of whom could certainly be better protected during adolescence.

During the war I made enquiries of a number of middle-aged prisoners who were mothers of families, as to up to what age girls should be protected by legal "age of consent." I put the question simply, explicitly, and personally, in order to have straight and simple replies. The result was absolutely deplorable. Not a mother of them all had any views as to 15, 16, 18, or any other age. They had forgotten all about their own young days. Some "didn't know," some "didn't think it mattered," some laughed. So much for the home protection of the street girl.

I next made enquiries among prostitutes themselves, taking about 50 as I happened on them, in several prisons. No girl knew of the questions beforehand, and I saw each girl alone. About 8 or 9 out of the 50 seemed too stupid or ignorant to be able to discuss the question at all. Except-

ing some of these, I give the first words of the replies of my first series of girls, twenty in number, from five different towns.

*Question:* "I want you to give me your own plain opinion on this. What do you think is the proper age for a girl to have sexual relations with a man? For instance, if you had a little daughter or a little sister, how long would you protect her, or would you like the law to protect her, and when do you think she would be old enough to go with a man?"

*Exact replies seriatim:* 18, 18, 18, 18, 18, 18, 18, 15, 18, 21, 18, 18, 18, 18, 16, 21, 21, 18, 18, 18.

*Question:* "But you can have a baby when you are 16? What about 16?"

*Replies—seriatim:* "Certainly not, it's too young." "Too young." "Too young." "It's not right." "It's not right." "It's too young." "I should have been too childish." "Fifteen is not too young because a girl is thinking of men then." "I shouldn't have been fit." "You wouldn't know enough." "It's too young." "It's not right." "I should have been afraid." "Too young." "It's not right." "He would knock her about." "You are too childish." "Too young." "It's too young."

These opinions may not coincide with those of parents and guardians, and do not coincide with those of our law-makers; but they are genuine first-hand opinions of the girls themselves.

The reason why the older women could give no

such definite opinion was, one can only imagine, that their social point of view deteriorates as they do, possibly owing to their own past treatment at the hands of the law.

Many of the girls did not know that there was an age of consent, or any law on the subject, but all except four said that the men they consorted with asked their age, and that they had been told, if they were questioned, to say they were 16. I discussed a change in the law with the more intelligent, and all stuck to it that 18 was the proper age, and said they did not see why both girls and men should not be punished if they broke such a law. Some admitted prostitution since the age of 14 and generally with regret.

Such are the unfortunate girls, often mere children, whom I have looked at, and talked to by the hundred during the last thirteen years. Other girls of their age are not unprotected, but are growing happily in school and hockey-field while they are being tempted, bought and sold, betrayed, and punished as common prostitutes. Of a society in which the double standard flourishes, in which fathers care so little for their children as to fail to protect their youth and immaturity, in which people care so little for the future mothers of the race that they will not legislate in the direction of their reasonable safety, in which the community is too selfish to help its rising generation to healthy early marriages, and in which young girls are bought without com-

punction by men old enough to be their fathers, there is little to be said, except that we have a long way to go yet towards civilization. One thing is sure, the sacrificial victim secures no salvation for its high priests. The young prostitute spreads both vice and venereal disease far and wide. She is a poison more disastrous to the community than it yet realizes. Her real tragedy is only seen by those competent observers, doctors, nurses, and institution workers, who meet her at close quarters. In their deep disgust at the waste and ruin of so many bright and promising young lives, those who survey the holocaust are fain to turn with relief to the thought of *Pithecanthropos*—the chimpanzee—the grotesque brute—faithful—and caring for his young.

## CHAPTER VIII

### PRISON AND VENEREAL DISEASE

Any discussion of the phenomena of prostitution would be incomplete without reference to venereal disease. A scientific or historical survey of the question is not possible here, and is obtainable up-to-date elsewhere. It is, nevertheless, necessary to recall a few plain facts which are often neglected in considering this subject, in order that the problem may be neither under nor over-estimated. The facts I adduce belong inseparably to my narrative, and are implicit in my personal conclusions.

Venereal disease is widespread, but its proportion to the general population is unknown, and no very valuable calculations on the subject exist. Since death certificates often ignore it, since it simulates the symptoms of many other diseases, and since its incidence cannot be estimated in direct illness, nor by the few deaths attributable directly to it, nor by any of the other manifestations of its presence, fear, much less panic, as to its ravages is to be avoided.

The following are a few generalizations with regard to it which are not always appreciated by those who desire to check its spread by any possible means.

Every act of intercourse with a diseased person

does not necessarily infect a healthy person. A considerable "sporting risk" always exists, which is varied by innumerable circumstances, possibly occasionally by precautions taken, but the evidence on this last point is not reassuring. The risk is never absent, and no one can say what, in any individual case, it is going to amount to. It has to be taken, and if the taker of the risk lives with a married partner, that partner will share it. Venereal disease can be passed from man to man by the agency of a woman who is herself non-infective, so that to trace the real source of an infection is frequently impossible.

Its effects are infinitely diverse, and have no relation to the moral life of the individual, which may vary from an exemplary or venial one, to a very selfish and vicious one. A first venture may bestow lifelong disease and great suffering on an individual, or he may throw off the disease with few symptoms and little suffering, or it may leave in its train much illness attributed to other causes. "Good luck" may follow a man for months or years before he meets his fate, or his fate may overtake him when and where he least looks for it. According to his knowledge and common sense, but also according to his constitution, possibly to the particular virulence of the poison, he may suffer mildly or most severely, may be able to conceal his illness, or may not. His views as to his right, as a social being, to give or take such risks will depend on the amount of

his intelligence, and moral sense. His attitude will, to a very considerable extent, influence his efforts at self-direction.

Venereal disease is spread by men and women who contract, often at an early age, habits of casual intercourse either with strangers (money or its equivalent passing), or through occasional, or habitual intercourse with friends or acquaintances of loose life. It is the person who, having acquired disease, does not cease from intercourse while in an infectious state, who spreads it, or, who being free from it, carries it. Just as the prostitute is regarded by the community as a despised and outcast person, and as a disgrace to society, so is venereal disease, the result of prostitution, looked upon as a shameful disease. There is a sub-group which argues that it is an unhappy, but unavoidable accompaniment of the stresses of civilized life, and attempts are made, in some quarters, to persuade the public not to look at the disease as one involving character, but to look at it simply as one of many other diseases of microbial origin. Nevertheless, except in the lowest and most ignorant circles, people do not openly proclaim such an illness. They keep it secret, and, like all persons who transgress the moral findings of the whole community, when their condition is exposed, they feel shame. Here it is herd-instinct that moves them. The teachings of religion, or the vetoes of prudery, or their own liberal thinking do not affect this sense of

shame, and the removal of these influences do not remove it. To make the disease public would mean to thousands of men and women the dissolution of marriage, the uprooting of ties, the infliction of cruel shocks on others, the loss of associates and friends, often of employment and prospects, and would lead to litigation of a number of varieties. The open admission of venereal disease, in any educated community, is unthinkable.

Only a small proportion of persons in our country are so insensitive to, or ignorant of public opinion as to use the special public clinics. Numbers will not go near them. There are people who will not even seek treatment in their own town, but who go far afield for it, so bound up is this disease with conduct and character.

We have also numbers of people who cannot be made to understand the nature of the problem, or of their own responsibilities, and who will not seek treatment—often indeed, cannot seek it—except in palliation of acute symptoms which disable them. All the world over, during the past century, methods for combating venereal disease have been tried: Hospitalization, registration of prostitutes, redlight districts, expulsion of the diseased from certain areas, notification of disease, medical scrutiny at frequent intervals, the employment of drugs and medicaments, the selection of supposed chaste and healthy women, have all failed, and risks remain risks and infection remains unchecked.

Each country has its own problem, and that problem is possibly more approachable in small and sparsely-populated countries, than in countries like the British Islands. Great Britain has a ring of ports round her shores—in and out of which runs daily a stream of shipping from our coasts and from abroad. We have a great flow of people to, and from Ireland, and the Continent. Internally we have large towns within an hour's journey of one another, and through these towns pass an immense nomad population of workers, seeking employment in factories, on earthworks, and buildings, at docks, and on ships. Thousands of men, roaming in this way, leave homes to be shared by some other man or men, and lodge themselves in some other man's or woman's home. Home ties and faithfulness are not easy for this shifting mass to preserve, and it is as ingenuously promiscuous in its sexual relations as in all others. To attempt to organize a scheme of treatment that would affect the incidence of venereal disease among these classes would be hopeless, and they are, of course, not the only contributors to the problem.

Experience has, however, shown that where the methods alluded to above have been tried, a feeling of false security has been engendered which has led to an increase of disease. In the Great War the revival, in some form or another, of most of the old methods, in the attempt to preserve the efficiency of armies, many on a scale

and with a thoroughness never before attempted, led to no success, and the deplorable army figures as to the incidence of venereal disease speak for themselves.

The habits of the community being what they were, and the risks being what they are, the inevitable occurred, and I am one of those who see no way that will modify the existing state of things. Our best hope seems to lie in man's evolution towards a higher civilization, which may modify much that now seems unmodifiable, and we must hope that in the course of a few centuries our population may become more immune to racial poisons.

I did not need my prison experiences to demonstrate to me how much untreated venereal disease exists, and although, at all times, there are persons in prison who have never had any previous treatment for their disease, the number obviously suffering has not, in my opinion, increased. One of my first acts as inspector was to draw attention to cases that came under my notice, and my attention was given to this subject throughout my thirteen years' service. There was, as I have said elsewhere, a great fall in the prison population, especially during the war, and there was also, during the war, a zealous attempt made to diagnose and treat disease in the prisons which accounted for my seeing relatively more cases. In addition, cases of venereal disease were "rounded up" and sent to prison. Notwith-

standing this, I am of opinion that, taking the country through, there was no increase of venereal disease among the classes that came most to prison. Scare may have unmasked them. It did nothing else. Following the excitement caused by the war, crowds of young girls appeared on the streets. It however became a fashion among street girls to be very "ladylike." Girls dressed and behaved quietly, and there was, of course, a great desire among them to be noticed by officers. Men of all ranks in uniform did not care to attract attention by associating with loud and noisy girls, and encouraged them to behave quietly.

Owing also to the difficulty of determining the class of women with whom the streets were thronged, it was important for the police not to make mistakes. The result was that the arrest of numbers of girls and women who were undoubtedly "common prostitutes" could not be effected.

Later, in the war, the absolute darkness at nights allowed prostitution to run riot and unchecked. As a matter of fact, although there was outcry in some quarters that something should be done, very little could be done. To satisfy the section who desired a protection for the military and naval forces, which it was, nevertheless, impossible to obtain, the unjust, and perfectly useless Regulation 40 D was introduced into the Regulations for the Defence of the Realm.

Under this ordinance a small number of women (about 400) were denounced, about half their number arrested, and about a quarter were punished. Then a public outcry caused the withdrawal of the order.

A further attempt was made in 1919, when the result of demobilization from the point of view of public health was in question, to pass a Criminal Law Amendment Bill. This was an "omnibus" measure, which besides re-introducing a general law analogous to Regulation 40 D, proposed drastic measures for detaining young girls for long periods. Few of the witnesses in Committee had a good word to say for the Bill, and it was dropped.

Another war measure was Regulation 13a, which provided for the expulsion from military areas of women known to be suffering from venereal disease. Lady visitors of prisons worked diligently to make provision for these hard cases, but regardless of their having homes, husbands, or children, the authorities drove them mercilessly out of the area, and imprisoned them if they returned. Such women, rendered homeless vagabonds by the Regulation, were of course free to wander and spread their disease elsewhere, and the Regulation was as futile as it was cruel. I remember seeing one poor girl in prison, who was about to have a child, and had nowhere to go on her discharge, her one woman relative, with whom she lived, having her home inside the military

area from which the girl had been expelled. A very small handful of women were brought under the Regulation, and 40 D and 13a are both chiefly interesting as examples of legislation which would have been ruthlessly carried out had the difficulties, fortunately, not proved too great. They indicate the necessity of perpetual vigilance on the part of educated women on behalf of those who, while no more to blame than other people, are helpless in stronger hands.

A method of dealing with young common prostitutes sprang up at the same time, which was more far-reaching than either of the above, and no less a menace to the liberty of women. It was the more dangerous because not carried out under any law or regulation, but only under the very large powers possessed by magistrates to keep people in prison on remand. Remand is necessary in many cases in order to make due inquiries, as to the accused person's identity or character, to assist the police in developing their case, and so on, or to keep the person in safe custody until he or she can be brought to trial. An ordinary remand is only for seven days, but it can be repeated as often as is necessary for the ends of justice. The girls arrested on this plan were remanded, and an enquiry made as to their "state of health." Excepting for this, their offences were such as are ordinarily dealt with summarily on the evidence of the police only, and they could have been convicted at once. The vast majority

of these girls did not refuse examination and blood tests when remanded in prison. The latter took more than a week to obtain, so that many girls were remanded a second time. If a diagnosis confirming their condition was obtained, they were sometimes remanded farther while treatment was administered. They were therefore kept in prison for an enquiry into something that had nothing to do with their offence, and was not necessary to their conviction, and, in the end, after being in prison several weeks, many were discharged unconvicted. In nine months to March, 1920, I noted 150 girls in one prison who were all remanded at least twice. Ten of these cases were especially striking. They were remanded from four to six times each, the ten travelling to, and from the court and the prison, 86 times. Five out of the ten were charged with "loitering." None of them were sent to prison in the end, although their collective detention on remand ran into years.

Out of the whole 150 cases, 69 were for "loitering," but only six out of the whole number were for the positive offence of "soliciting." Only 24 out of the 150 were sent to prison on conviction. We thus have a herd of girls driven into prison on remand, or left there with the main object of diagnosing and treating venereal disease, which was not their offence.

A magistrate's court is a place where mercy is shown as well as justice done, but it is disquieting

when the end of justice is manifestly deflected to some other end, as in these cases. Laws are not made for detaining the diseased, or punishing prostitution, because they cannot be made in the present state of the world and of public opinion, and discretionary substitutes in the hands of the administrators of justice which involve detention in a prison, are to be regarded with suspicion.

In addition to the above group, there was the group called the "surety cases." Under an old, and until recently little used Act, now revived and used in dealing with women to a much greater extent than with men, many girls were required to find sureties for good behaviour.

The treatment of these women by the magistrates increased during the war thus:—

| Year. | Women.  | Men. | Year. | Women.  | Men. |
|-------|---------|------|-------|---------|------|
| 1914  | ... 209 | 109  | 1917  | ... 488 | 58   |
| 1915  | ... 221 | 103  | 1918  | ... 335 | 7    |
| 1916  | ... 167 | 84   | 1919  | ... 336 | 7    |

Total women, 1,756. Total men, 368.

The women, therefore, received this particular punishment, the greater part of them being prostitutes, four times as often as the men.

If they failed to find sureties, which were far too heavy to be produced by themselves, their clients or friends, they were sent to prison. They could not release themselves as they could by payment, or part payment of a fine. They could be committed for a longer period, and had to stay in prison. This ensured a period of treatment

for their condition. In 1915 I noted 98 girls who had been sent to prison in this way during two years. Of these, 72 were 21 years of age and under. In noting these cases I included no girl who could be deemed a hardened offender. None had had more than two recent short convictions, the majority had had only one, and 42 of the girls had had none.

The rate at which these young "common prostitutes" become habitual offenders is shown by the facts about these girls. At the time of my count 13 were still in prison. Only one who could have been re-convicted had not been, all the rest had been convicted from two to six times each. The severity of these sentences is shown by the fact that some of these offenders, out of the two years in review, spent 6, 9, 12 or 15 months in prison each, and "did time" collectively amounting to 40 years—*i.e.*, 33 years in default of sureties, and seven years of ordinary imprisonment.

In London the ostensible reason for sending girls for examination on remand was to see if they were fit to be sent to Homes. Hardly any of the Homes or institutions for girls contains a little infirmary where they could have been quietly treated under the doctor attending the Home. Most of the Homes demanded a certificate of freedom of the girl from disease before admitting her, which limited the cases they would take, very strictly. Many had been demanding these certi-

ificates for years, although all that any doctor could certify was, that he could not see any signs of disease. Such a certificate, formerly, or at present, would be absolutely useless to the keepers of any Home, where a careful scrutiny of the girl's health, for a long time, would always be necessary. The misunderstanding of the nature of these certificates may of course lead, occasionally, to misunderstanding with the doctors who elect to give them. In a measure I think it must be laid at the door of the Homes (who might have found some better way of procedure) that these poor girls had to suffer what they did in order to gain admittance, but I can see nothing to justify the sending of a young girl to a prison in order to ascertain the state of her health. In order to get these girls into a place of safety and under good influences they were sent to the prison for examination. If diseased, they were not eligible for a Home, and the only alternative was for the court to punish, or let them go. When a girl was received in prison she was not examined against her will. But all prisoners, especially first offenders, are confused and bewildered in prison, and are densely ignorant of the why and wherefore of much that is happening to them. Many, I know, believed and hoped that examination would clear them of the charge against them, few understood the evidence of the blood-test, and the microscope. No one contends that anything reported at the courts would

have influenced the magistrates in dealing with them, except by making it impossible to give them the choice of a Home, as an alternative to imprisonment, although the cases remanded for treatment remain unexplained. But if the girls themselves had realized that by permitting the examinations, they were giving evidence against themselves in a matter that might very well affect at any rate the length of their sentences, if they had realized that they were giving information outside the prison about themselves, and had known what this might involve, I think they would not have consented. There were always some who refused. Of course after their first remand, it was known whether they were eligible for a Home or not. As a matter of fact, one told me she had firmly refused a home or hospital from the first, others were obviously unsuitable. I do not know what personal rights such a girl is accorded in the eyes of her accusers, but I am afraid the saying of a certain prison governor is only too true. Speaking of Regulation 13a, I said: "One would think these women had no personal rights in the world." "Rights?" he replied, "Oh, no—a prostitute has no rights." Yet she possesses the same rights as other people in this, that she is *not obliged to give evidence against herself*. She ought not to be invited to do so.

Perhaps what is thought of the rights of a prostitute is best indicated by the reports which I

read in the newspapers during the war of some of these very cases, who had given evidence against themselves. The evidence given in the court as to the girl's condition was published, and her name and address were given. If such a report would not have been "actionable," had there been any person to take action for her, I am much mistaken. Such a newspaper report was a plain warning to the public to avoid this girl. If any diseased soldier, or any other diseased man had been so treated, what would have been said? But, over and above a girl's rights to understand the whole of the position in which she finds herself, and to protect herself from any punishment that she may find threatening her, is the question of the injury done her, by her prison treatment. Some people have said to me: "They are so degraded you can't degrade them more." I think they are not always degraded; degradation is a state of the soul. I think also that their captors may easily make the girls the instruments of their own degradation. Certainly those who publish their disease, or stone them, are not less degraded than they are. But when their treatment is considered, it is not, on the whole, surprising that the 42 first offenders I spoke of soon hardened up into "habituals."

Once in prison they were in the hands of skilled and cheerful nurses and kindly doctors, who were striving to save them from the consequences of their folly. Did they not get the best of treatment? Yes—but what else did they

get? First the title "common prostitute." Next, they were not put into the prison hospital, for the best of reasons—there was no accommodation for them. They were specially located together on one landing, and it was well-known what their cases were—other women had the opportunity of recognizing them. When they were marched in parties to the hospital for treatment the other women jeered at them. They were brought in parties to the door of the doctor's treatment rooms and stood outside until their turn came, so that all coming and going to, and from the hospital could mark them. They had no sheltering secrecy. They had to "brazen it out," and rely on each other for the comfort and countenance which the discomfited and discountenanced continually offer one another. Like a flock of sheep they were brought there, treated, marched away again to their cells. And this not once, but month after month, sentence after sentence, until all were weary of it. They were recognized in police courts, had fresh "reports on health," and the round to go through again and again. And yet this was not considered to be a system anything like the old Contagious Diseases Act!

I have related how easy it is, at times, to get hold of the common prostitute and draw her from her life, and I could quote splendid results of the labours of some experienced, wide-minded women who understand, and are able to rescue some of the wildest of these girls. But although

great efforts were expended in trying to help these girls who were sent to prison and treated there for venereal disease, one worker after another told me what a hopeless task it was, and how the girls refused all assistance, and avowed their intention of continuing their life.

I found in conversation with these prisoners that they regarded the ordinary arrest and fine as a kind of tax on their means of livelihood. When they could not pay it they accepted the alternative imprisonment with philosophy. They always had the hope of being bought out of the prison by some friend who might pay the whole, or a part of the fine. For, the payment of her fine is, to many a girl, the price of another excursion into vice. She is free to depart with her purchaser as soon as the fine is paid, and to continue her trade until the next "cop" which it is her task to elude.

But prisoners regard the heavy sureties, which were far beyond their means, as State blackmail, and the alternative detention which they could not shorten by part payments, as a revengeful punishment. They did not see why they should be treated in this way when their men associates were not shut up for treatment, but were free to go about infecting other girls. They expressed indignation at their punishment, and constantly assured those in charge of them that they would not reform. The "hardening" process was assisted by this form of punishment, as many prison visitors agreed. It is from such begin-

nings as this that the cynicism is brought about, which develops the procuress and brothel keeper.

Now what of the results of all this medical treatment? It was comparatively seldom that an early case of disease arrived in the prisons at all. Some very infective cases came, and responded to treatment, but many only temporarily. Many cases of syphilis were in a late secondary stage when cure could not be obtained, and relapses were common, a few tertiary cases were probably non-infective, and in a different category. Cases of gonorrhœa were practically incurable, either in the time, or because of their character, and underwent little amelioration. And it is to be remembered that even if cure had been effected in any of these cases *one day* out of prison might mean re-infection. The only certain cure for a woman, is, to cure her *prostitution*. That being accomplished, her disease is no longer a danger to others. Venereal disease is, after all, only a symptom itself of a larger disease. But these girls knew that they were being cleaned-up only to be returned to the streets. There was little chance of curing a girl's disease when her market value was actually improved by the medical treatment she had in prison. For all this treatment of women gave men a false idea of security. Men will come up to a prison and pay the remainder of a girl's fine and take her away, upon her assurance that she has been "under the doctor." A girl often advertises her six weeks'

recent detention in prison and makes a profit by it. So that all that the expensive arresting, remanding, convicting, and careful and laborious treatment may effect, for the girl, is to send her out of prison on the whole as great, if not a greater, danger than before.

I noted a series of 138 girls under 21 who were treated in one prison during 15 months. Only one in every 17 was pronounced "probably non-contagious" on discharge. Some were only treated for a week or two, but of 36 women and girls who were treated from 6 to 15 months at intervals, in the most thorough manner, all were under treatment at the time of discharge, and none were pronounced even "probably non-contagious."

I am persuaded that nothing could be worse than this treatment morally for young prisoners, and I cannot see that the very slight improvement in their health, which is effected, is balanced by their increased degradation, nor that the removal from the streets of what is really an infinitesimal number of infected prostitutes who will all be practising their trade in an infected condition again in a few weeks' time, can possibly affect the general problem of prophylaxis.

Probably many thousands of pounds of public money are spent with the result of "curing" a very few bodies for a very short time, and damning rather more effectively rather more souls for a much longer time.

Finally, I must refer in this connection to the "age of consent." The following group of girls represent fairly the age-incidence of venereal disease. They were taken from one prison :—

|    |   |      |                    |
|----|---|------|--------------------|
|    | 5 | were | 16                 |
| 24 | „ |      | 17                 |
| —  | „ |      | 18                 |
| 37 | „ |      | 19                 |
| 46 | „ |      | 20                 |
| 63 | „ |      | 21 (highest point) |
| 46 | „ |      | 22                 |
| 25 | „ |      | 23                 |
| 23 | „ |      | 24                 |
| 13 | „ |      | 25                 |

Supposing each girl to be untreated, or, if treated late in her disease, to be in an actively infective state for two or three years at least, it is obvious that a large number of girls would escape infection if the age of consent were raised as high as 18. Such a rise would probably protect numbers of girls over 18, as well as those under. Of course cases occur at much later ages, but they are many fewer, and probably account for much less infection than do the younger cases. In my opinion a measure of protection of this kind would probably cause a decrease of 50 per cent. of infected cases in the population. Such a measure could injure no one, and would be the cheapest conceivable form of public prophylaxis. It is agreed by all educated women that such a measure is desirable

write upon himself his name and address, and other designs connected with ships, regiments, clubs, and so on. But the vast majority of individuals are not marked in any such way, but are marked obscurely with the names (often Christian names) of friends, or with pictures or symbols from the stock carried by the tattooer, so that a number of persons in one district may carry identical marks for no other reason than this.

In precisely the same manner, and with the same designs, not only hundreds of youths, but hundreds of women and girls from the poorest and "submerged" classes, are also tattooed. Since these people live in an underworld of their own, and the women, at any rate, are seldom to be seen doing honourable work with uncovered arms, they escape notice, and the practice, in their case, is little known outside their circle.

The custom is certainly on the increase. Professional tattooers are to be found in every large town, and a great deal of money is spent upon the designs. A professional tattooer of small and simple designs, who was himself tattooed from head to foot, and whom I interviewed in prison, informed me that he could earn as much as a pound a night in small sums. He said he had tattooed hundreds of men and women of all ages. He was something of an enthusiast for his art, and said that a great impetus had been given to this trade, during the South African War,

by the invention of an electric needle which did the work more quickly, and painlessly than the older tools.

What can be said in favour of a custom which interests, and attracts so many people? First, that there is no inherent harm in it, if, and when it is skilfully and cleanly done on a healthy subject. Æsthetically considered, it is, no doubt, a somewhat bizarre form of ornament, but then so are many other forms. Hats and neck-ties cannot always be defended on the score of beauty, ear and nose rings are equally a matter of the taste of the wearer. In the whole field of personal adornment our freedom and satisfaction depend upon the generous toleration of our fellow-creatures. There are people who see no beauty in even the most skilful designs printed upon the human body, and who conceive the practice to be totally barbarous and tasteless. There are those who like it. I must confess, personally, to finding a beauty of its own in tattooed work finely-executed, in blue and vermilion, on the perfect background furnished by the human skin. It seems to me at times to rival the work on old china in its delicate drawing, and depth and transparency of colour. But beautiful work is seldom to be seen, and among those to whom reference is made here, the work is as a rule, ill-drawn, coarse, and frequently done from a poor transfer.

If it is not beautiful, is it useful in any way?

It seems to me to be in harmony with nature's scheme, and to be done in response to a more or less normal impulse to decorate in order to attract. It is surely in the category of the nose and ear ring, powder and paint, fine hair-dressing, showy or fantastic clothing. It has its place, however, crudely, directly or barely consciously among these things—indeed, it may be superior to any of them as a means of attraction, on account of the instant and close attention which it focusses on its possessor. Among inarticulate and simple people, the tattooed pattern may be of the same use in beginning an acquaintance, promoting an intimacy, establishing a courtship, as may a diamond butterfly or an ivory fan among the people who have more possessions.

A poor ungroomed young man, or a poor young woman without fresh or tidy clothing, and small chance of keeping any she may acquire, may find an invaluable asset in the insistent skin picture which cannot find its way to the pawn-shop. Again, the satisfaction of sentiment deserves sympathetic mention, and who shall say that the tattooed finger-ring does not speak as loudly of constancy as the detachable gold one? Poor people have to travel far afield in search of work, and casual friendships are easily formed, and broken again. Long separation, changes of address, lack of letters or news, tend to forgetfulness, and the severing of ties, where, had circumstances been more favourable, remembrance and

faithfulness would have had a better chance. But, whatever the circumstances, tattooed symbols such as portraits, clasped hands, united hearts, names, rings, and so on, represent just the same sentiments as do the photographs, tokens, keepsakes or mascots among people who can buy these things. Just as the richer people value such gifts, exchange them, and through them express their feelings, so also are poor and simple folk influenced, so that they desire to write their symbols upon themselves, and on one another. As to the symbols—all alike are liable to survive the sentiments they represented, but probably all alike witness the fact that man cannot live by bread alone. Those who create the symbolism show their desire to draw others to them, and to live in their thought, although all that many of the tattooed can explain is that it was “just a fancy.” I am, therefore, disposed to sympathize with the custom. But all customs may become in turn fashionable, silly, an occasion for senseless bravado, and in the last resort may be used for the exploitation of the foolish and inexperienced, or for more actively harmful ends. Something of the kind has come about in this matter of tattooing. When we find that the practise leads to the exploitation, and even ruin of the tattooed person, marks down the tattooed individual as being of immoral character, hampers the individual in the all-important affair of getting an honest living, and when we find farther that

this train of misfortune originates, in most cases, before the subject of it has come to years of discretion, it becomes time to think more about it.

Now these results happen to the tattooed women. Nothing happens to a tattooed man, except such happenings in the spiritual sphere as may recompense his levity in encouraging a practice which does a specific harm to others. All over Europe, for many years, tattooing in a woman has been recognised as the mark of the loose living woman—of the woman who sells herself.

I take the following opinions from about 50 cases which I noted at random up and down the country on my inspecting rounds, or which were noted for me by prison visitors who knew the girls. The great majority were young girls.

A. said : " Yes, I'm done for now. I was in drink when it was done."

B. said : " Of course I was in drink or I should never have had it done."

C. said : " I've never been able to get a place since."

D. said : " I'd go to a Home now only when I come out I'd be no better off. I could never get a place with these marks on me. I can't go home neither and disgrace mother. There ought to be a law against doing young girls. There's dozens 14 and 15 years old being done every night in Aldershot."

E. said : " It makes you look lower than you are. Everybody knows what I've been."

F. said : " I shall never forget what I felt when I woke up and found it done. I rubbed it with butter and scraped it with a knife till it was raw and bleeding. Now I can't get decent work."

G. said : " It makes you look common."

H. said : " It has stood in my light. People I worked with threw it up at me that I hadn't been respectable. I have had respectable places, but I had to keep my sleeves down. I'm sorry I ever had it done." (Cried).

I. said : " There's tattooing done every night at ———. It ought to be stopped. My mother would have a fit if she saw this."

The significance of tattooing is recognized by the women of the working-classes. Most rescue workers, and prison officials know what an obstacle to a woman's reclamation the marks are.

At the time of my enquiry, Mrs. Bramwell Booth wrote me : " Our officers who are in charge of rescue Homes are very glad this matter is being taken-up as they have found that the marks are a difficulty in the way of getting respectable situations for the women, and many of the women themselves bitterly regret being so marked."

I had also the testimony of other lady visitors of the difficulties experienced, some employers dismissing the girls, and reproaching the ladies for sending them. These girls were found-out because they would not roll up their sleeves at their work.

Many employers of labour in such trades as laundry-work or food-stuffs, as well as those employing domestic servants, refuse to take tattooed women, regarding them as too unclean, low, and untrustworthy to be employed on their work.

Over and over again I have asked women prisoners who were obviously able domestic workers, why they did not go to situations, only to get the surprised and perfectly genuine answer: "What! With these on my arm?" There are towns in which it is possible to go through large factories where women are working with sleeves rolled-up, and find no sign of a tattoo mark on them, but in the common lodging-houses, work-house, or prison one may always find women with their arms, and often other parts of their body covered with the marks. A recital of a few of the cases of which I have notes may help to describe the custom:—

X.: On chest, a name. On right arm, "True Love," a name, flowers and leaves, a name, "True Friend" (two of the names were of women and two of men). Left arm, name, butterfly, cross, "In memory of my mother," rose, initials, flowers and leaves.



The School of Phantasy



- 1 Memorial Cross
- 3 Name of Lover

- 2 Portrait of Lover
- 4 Symbol of Nationality

*Another case:* On arms, two men's names, "True Love," flowers, scroll, a woman's name, a star, 12 lines and leaves, heart, clasped hands, men's names, flowers, two men's names, spots, heart, "True Love," heart, clasped hands, two men's names, "True Love."

*Another:* Half figure of a woman, naked man in waist-cloth, fighting. Also initials on arms.

The women consider themselves quite as much hall-marked by one mark as by a whole series.

Many religious symbols or pictures appear to be chosen by very young girls for the first tattooing, possibly at the suggestion of the tattooer. One girl described how the tattooer had persuaded her. He said: "Well, have a religious picture—that ain't going to do you any harm." Later the same girl's arms may be found covered with men's names very much in the boastful spirit of the scalp-hunter. Later again, the names may be obliterated, or nearly so, by red and blue designs, such as a creeping plant, heavily superimposed. The names of "Father" or "Mother" and sometimes memorial crosses, are put near the wrist. This is an attempt to become "respectable" again, and is seen in many cases. Crosses are also put next the names of dead lovers, and sometimes these are ruled out with a line through them. Some girls are so ignorant that they do not know the meaning of the designs or pictures, but the following were thus explained by their owner:—

Cross with one heart—Memory of dear husband.

Cross with flowers—Memory of dear father and mother.

Cross with clinging woman—Unchanging love.

Crucifix—Sacred emblem.

Picture of Nativity—Sacred emblem.

United hearts—Love.

Hands crossed over hearts—True love.

Pansy in pot—Dearest.

Snake round cross—Vengeance.

This girl was tattooed on every part of her body except her face. She also had a straight and a coiled snake. She earned her living by exhibiting herself.

I have seen some fine work done in snakes, although I missed seeing a woman tattooed from head to heels with a snake coiled round her body, who was often in prison. Another fine piece of work, I recently saw, consisted of a pattern of leaves all over the back, arms, and chest, with a number of little naked figures among the leaves.

Another girl had a picture of the Nativity on her chest, and other designs; another the Lord's Supper on her abdomen. One had a large crucifix on her back, and another (Mrs. Bramwell Booth's account) a ship in full sail on her chest. The latter women get their living by showing themselves at fairs and elsewhere, for money, and are in rather a different category from the others, but all are said to be women of the prostitute class.

The youngest tattooed girl had been done at 13 years of age, but the majority had been done between 17 and 20. I found that 17 was a very common age. Only one woman said it had been no disadvantage to her; all the others, old or young, said they much regretted having had it done as they could not afterwards get work.

All the reasons for having it done, given by the girls, show that their circumstances more or less impel them to this foolish custom. They all knew that it meant "the gay life." Some said they were excited, or drunk, or over-persuaded by other girls, or by men. Some had no memory of having had it done. Some did it for "a lark"; some because "they went mad after a feller"; some in order that they might recall themselves to a partner, or in fulfilment of some pledge or compact.

A large number were done in public-houses where the tattooers show their designs at nights. Other places where the operation is performed have been mentioned as small newspaper, sweet, or tobacco-shops, tattooing-shops, shooting-galleries, and so on. Prison visitors believe that many of these places are brothels, or places of introduction. The prices of the designs range from 3d. for initials or a name, up to 2/6, 5/-, or 7/6 for a larger picture. At this rate I have seen many women with two or three pounds' worth of designs on their arms and bodies. Sometimes the girls pay for themselves, or for

one another, but they are nearly always paid for by their male companions. The commonest patterns include names, initials, naval and military trophies, or designs, clasped hands, such sentiment as "I love so and so," graves, crosses, wreaths, memorial words, dancers, prize-fighters, birds, and so on. At times the patterns are chosen merely by price, and, if there is an apparent uniformity of sentiment in a district, it may only be due to the limited number of patterns in the tattooer's stock. The women who not infrequently tattoo themselves with ink or coal-dust while on long sentences, doubtless do so in response to phantasies, or old memories.

The vehicle for tattooing is usually Indian ink or vermilion, but ink, coal-dust, blacking, and the tar-bubbles from burning coal are sometimes used.

The operation is said by some to be quite painless, but others get swollen and inflamed arms. The tattooer to whom I talked, said that he had seen very bad arms follow the operation, chiefly in dirty and drunken people, and showed signs of such an accident on his own arm. All seemed to be agreed that the heavy tattooing to cover previous marks is often followed by severe pain and swelling. In one case a girl had had to go to a hospital for treatment. The danger of the process in ignorant hands is well known, and the spread of venereal disease, in this way, is known to have occurred.

As regards the superstitions attached to the custom, there appears to be a widespread belief that tattooing is a safeguard against venereal disease, and a prison visitor tells me that religious pictures are considered a protection from all dangers. One very respectable man, in a good position, told this lady of men who, before going to sea, had a Dove or Cross tattooed, "and one actually had the gravestone of his mother, with the usual history, tattooed on his chest, and says that no harm has happened to him."

The men who tattoo the girls seem, in many instances, to be low and disreputable characters, and both they, and women with whom they associate, not infrequently get into prison.

They are described by the rescue workers who have contributed to my cases thus:—

"B is a man who visits the public-houses regularly, in ——— and performing on girls who are half or wholly under the influence of drink."

"The man who did her was in the profession, she living with him. He had to fly the country as ——— was too hot for him. He occasionally went to public-houses, doing the work there."

"Two men who have lock-up shops are ——— and ———. These men do the tattooing in their own shops, and occasionally in public-houses."

"It seems that men enter the town for the express purpose, and the girls get fascinated, one trying to outdo the other in the number and kind of tattoo marks."

Another lady told me she had called the attention of the police to a tattooer who had brutally ill-treated a girl who lived with him.

The men appear to follow regiments from town to town, and I found I was able to identify one man's handiwork in far distant towns. The custom of tattooing young girls is without any question productive of unalloyed harm. There are people who profit by it. Not only do the operators themselves live by it, but a girl who is marked young, is acceptable to brothel-keepers, as she is, to some extent, in their power. Respectable lodging-house keepers, of course, refuse her. "The girls can be traced by their marks if they rob or infect their clients. For this reason they often get out of a district, and one woman was probably not exaggerating when she said to me 'You carry your life in your hands at this job.'"

A man who finds a very young girl tattooed is relieved of any fear he may have of betraying the innocent. A good proportion of these women, as of other prostitutes, marry, and it is unfair that they should carry the record of the past thus advertised. Some are glad to be rescued, and are rescued, and the bread of honesty, which comes hardly to any person, comes particularly hardly to them.

Their chances of a decent and respectable marriage are not great. I have known wild, irresponsible girls of 16 or 17 obtain by theft, or

otherwise, 7/6 or 10/-, and although they do not own a bed to sleep in, they will spend it all on a skin-picture. Many tell me in perfect simplicity that they were incapably, or insensibly drunk when it was done; apart from this, very unseemly scenes over the operation have been described to me.

As regards the men and boys, the degradation of moral outlook, and the perversion of their ideas, is shown by the string of women's names and initials with which they, too, mark themselves. As a "love token" the practice signifies next to nothing, and in its present stage could, with advantage be put down by law. It should be forbidden in public houses, and it should be forbidden by law to all minors, and men and women convicted of tattooing a minor should be punished. I believe that few girls would submit to it after they were 21 years of age, as they so quickly see their folly. Such a law would save numbers from branding themselves, or rather from being branded by older people as prostitutes before they have the sense to realize what they are doing, and would save many from becoming outcasts and prostitutes, and possibly criminals, at all.

## CHAPTER X

### SYSTEMS AND THEIR FRUITS

The greatest value of a system often lies in the fact that it does not work. If systems worked we might begin to despair. While we keep our belief in them they have an effect on most of us not unlike the effect of morphia. First they excite us, and then we go gently to sleep and dream of things that, since the creation of the world, have never come to pass, and will never come to pass.

When we awake, stupefied, we suffer amazement at our plight. At this point the American stretches himself, gets on his feet, and hastens to breathe fresh air. It is the point at which, in Great Britain, we are wont to sink back on our pillow and close our eyes. Ours is possibly the reaction of old age to an anodyne; we murmur something about proceeding tentatively, and call it caution.

The Local Prison System is good enough for its purpose. That is to say, its purpose is so bad, since it deters, or reforms, or even annoys so few of those who come under it, that there seems to be no particular object in improving it. It is very complicated, and would benefit by much simplification, but the complexities do not really affect the prisoner much. Long use tells the prisoner what she is to have, and to do, but

she is not interested in such matters. She hardly ever complains or clamours for any right. She rarely asks for a privilege, or for any exceptional treatment. In the vagabond world material things count for so little. As things are, as offences are, and punishments are, there is really nothing much to say. In a prison it is entirely profitless to talk about offences and punishments, and no one does so. It is not very good form, and, if you begin moralizing, you so soon find yourself talking "through your hat." What you do in prison, is neither good nor harm. It is not a place of purgation, it is rather a place of suspended animation, bearing no relation to the rest of the earth, nor to any place above, or below it. In it, you hibernate—you don't do penance, you do "time."

In most local prisons are more or less happy families of old friends. There is no trouble in such a prison except with a handful of drink-sodden, or half-lunatic women. The prison is as good an hotel as any other for its ever-changing stream of temporary visitors. New-comers who begin to "grouse" or to cry, or to make any other unseemly exhibition of themselves, don't do that twice; they learn "sense"—prison sense—from the rest. Working hours are spread over the day, and work is easy and unexact. The tone is set, and set very well, for its purpose, by the old prisoner—the woman of many convictions—the "Product of the Prison System," as she is

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called. The Product is quite an agreeable woman, she is at home, she knows where things are, she keeps the place straight, she counsels the new-comer to "treat 'em (her gaolers) fair, and they'll treat you fair." She is, in prison, what the sergeant is to the regiment, and what the prison would do without her, one does not like to imagine. She is trustworthy, she is clean, and tidy, and polite and hefty. She gets the domestic work done up to time, is a treasure in the main industries, and leads the singing in chapel. She is a bit of a disciplinarian, and keen for the honour of the establishment. If there is anything the inspector had better not see, she covers it with such artistry that it would only be mean of the inspector to uncover it. She lies fluently, if she thinks it will protect the budding warder from the inspectorial probe.

You can hardly believe that, on her discharge to-morrow, this efficient and reliable creature, under the influence of a modicum of refreshment, will be going "head down" for the policeman. Her ambivalency is, however, her best possession in the life she leads. Outside the prison she is the product of her group and circle, inside she is the product of—inside. Visitors remark on her peaceful and pretty face. She is, in fact, a woman whose instincts are all satisfied in different directions. Her quarrel is never with life. "Reformative influences," as they are called, pass over her head as the clouds pass over

the mountain tops. Somewhere the sun is shining, and she never wastes a thought upon them. They are the job of the chaplain, and his crowd. She has even charity for these people who are always "joring." She tells you "they mean well, but as far as actions go, it is years since they have given a person anyfink to go out with. Let 'em jore." As one kindly soul said to me of the chaplain of her prison: "After all, you know, they're paid for it, and 'e 'as a family at 'ome." In ten years you will probably find her there still, unmoved by anything that has been done to, or for her, and you will be quite attached to her. She is an example of what your prison makes of her *provided that she gets out of it sufficiently often to live absolutely otherwise*. She is the *ne plus ultra* of what is anti-social. The bill for her entertainment is the affair of the taxpayer only.

But, as a vindication of the majesty of the law, the local prison is merely a bad joke. It has, however, one very serious aspect. It is the cradle and training-ground of the young criminal. A young prisoner, even without verbal communication with the Product, learns her philosophy, and reacts to her example, and will presently find her way to more costly prisons, and under more drastic systems such as "The Borstal" and the "Penal."

During many years, the prison population has continued to fall in numbers. It is less by many

thousands than in the year when I began my inspector's work. Many reasons for the decrease have been given, and probably many of these are correct, but we have no certain knowledge of which social factors have accounted for the reduction. We know that the allowance of time in which to pay fines has reduced the figures. Possibly, as punishments become more lenient, the numbers of those let off with an admonition are becoming larger.

The number of boy prisoners between the ages of 16 and 21, of course went down, during the war, by a large figure. During the ten years 1909 to 1918, the number of girls between the ages of 16 and 21 increased in proportion to that of women of other ages. The numbers have fluctuated from year to year, but probably the tendency to give young offenders rather longer sentences than formerly, or to send them to the Borstal Institution, has contributed to the reduction of the numbers punished. An outstanding fact, however, is, that in 1909 the girls between 16 and 21 years of age were, to the total women convicted, one in 32. In 1919 the girls were, to the total women convicted, one in six. This was a great rise, taking into account that the whole woman population had fallen, in this period, by 31,547. Not only was the proportion of girls to women relatively higher, but actually higher, standing in 1909 at 1,234, and in 1919 at 1,429. It has since fallen again. During these years,

especially latterly, the Borstal Institution at Aylesbury had been drawing girls between these ages, and through the long sentences given to these girls, the number of those who could, and probably would have been re-convicted, was diminished. This longer detention must have made a difference of some hundreds to the number of convictions, which would otherwise have been still higher than they were.

Some years ago, in looking through the prison registers, I was struck by the fact that a smart sentence of three months or over, in a local prison, either as a first sentence, or as one which succeeded a series of short sentences, was often the last. With the smart sentence of several months, the delinquent begins to consider her chances of "getting in the penal" if she tempts justice any farther. Of course, there are those whom neither three months, nor three years, will stop. Prisoners have often remarked to me that "if this sort of thing (the smart sentence) is going to happen to them, they will have to chuck coming here."

I have, at times, frightened them away from prison. I once saw a girl who had had five or six convictions in rapid succession, and I was told she seemed to think it was a joke. I sent for her, and after giving her some straight talk, warned her that, if ever she came again, I would see if I could not get her "put away in the Borstal for three years." When she returned to her seat in

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the needlework party, her sobs could be heard all down the prison. The matron was melted and said: "Oh! Dr. Gordon, that poor girl!" I replied: "Now don't you comfort her, matron. Rub it in what we will do to her if she comes again." She never did come again.

The rescue work of Lady Visitors of prisons is little heard of. It is, however, of great value. I cannot give it the space it deserves, but I append here an account of the work of one lady in a seaport town. Her splendid record of successes is of girls all of whom had been prostitutes, and many multiple offenders. All were persuaded by her to put themselves voluntarily, and to remain, in helping hands.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> These girls are taken from a list containing a number of women of higher ages. All were prostitutes. Many came from the very lowest surroundings. Some were rescued while on probation, some after short sentences. Ten were committed for periods varying from 3 to 12 months for various offences.

|       | AGE. | TREATMENT. |         |     | RESULT.                                      |
|-------|------|------------|---------|-----|----------------------------------------------|
| I.    | 21   | In home    | 4 years | ... | Doing well                                   |
| II.   | 29   | "          | 2       | "   | Now at home. Going to be married.            |
| III.  | 17   | "          | 2       | "   | Very satisfactory.                           |
| IV.   | 19   | "          | 1       | "   | Now in situation. Giving every satisfaction. |
| V.    | 25   | "          | 2       | "   | Made a very capable woman.                   |
| VI.   | 19   | "          | 2       | "   | Doing well.                                  |
| VII.  | 18   | "          | 1       | "   | Now in situation. Very good girl.            |
| VIII. | 19   | "          | 2       | "   | Now married and very happy.                  |
| IX.   | 24   | "          | 2       | "   | Now married. Not happy.                      |
| X.    | 20   | "          | 2       | "   | Doing very well indeed.                      |
| XI.   | 24   | "          | 2       | "   | Doing very well indeed.                      |
| XII.  | 18   | "          | 2       | "   | Now in situation, doing very well.           |

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|                                                     | AGE. | TREATMENT.              | RESULT.                                 |
|-----------------------------------------------------|------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| XIII.                                               | 19   | In home 2 years ...     | Now with parents. Conduct satisfactory. |
| XIV.                                                | 16   | " 2 " ...               | Still in Home.                          |
| XV.                                                 | 19   | " 2 " ...               | Still in Home.                          |
| XVI.                                                | 20   | " 2 " ...               | Now married and very happy.             |
| XVII.                                               | 19   | " 2 " ...               | Very great improvement.                 |
| XVIII.                                              | 24   | " 1 " ...               | Doing well.                             |
| XIX.                                                | 22   | " 2 " ...               | Now in situation.                       |
| XX.                                                 | 21   | " 2 " ...               | Now in situation. Doing well.           |
| XXI.                                                | 18   | " 2 " ...               | Died in an asylum.                      |
| XXII.                                               | 23   | " 2 " ...               | Married, and very happy.                |
| XXIII.                                              | 18   | " 2 " ...               | Now in situation and doing well.        |
| XXIV.                                               | 22   | " 2½ " ...              | Died of consumption.                    |
| XXV.                                                | 24   | " 2 " ...               | Now in Home. Greatly improved.          |
| XXVI.                                               | 24   | " 2 " ...               | Not so satisfactory.                    |
| XXVII.                                              | 22   | " 1 " ...               | Doing well.                             |
| XXVIII.                                             | 21   | " 5 months ...          | Greatly improved.                       |
| XXIX.                                               | 24   | " 6 " ...               | Doing very well.                        |
| XXX.                                                | 29   | " 2 years ...           | Now housekeeper in gentleman's family.  |
| XXXI.                                               | 16   | " 2 " ...               | Now in situation doing very well.       |
| XXXII.                                              | 19   | " 2½ " ...              | Still in Home.                          |
| XXXIII.                                             | 18   | " 1 " ...               | Died of consumption.                    |
| XXXIV.                                              | 22   | " 2 " ...               | Now in situation.                       |
| XXXV.                                               | 23   | " 2 " ...               | Now in situation doing well.            |
| XXXVI.                                              | 20   | " 2 " ...               | With aunt in London doing well.         |
| XXXVII.                                             | 20   | " 1½ " ...              | Doing very well.                        |
| XXXVIII.                                            | 17   | " 1 " ...               | Doing very well.                        |
| XXXIX.                                              | 16   | " 1½ " ...              | Doing exceedingly well.                 |
| <i>On probation or after discharge from prison.</i> |      |                         |                                         |
| XL.                                                 | 28   | In Home 1½ years ...    | Now married and doing well.             |
| XLI.                                                | 23   | Now in Home ...         | Doing well. One of the worst.           |
| XLII.                                               | 20   | Restored to friends ... | Doing well.                             |
| XLIII.                                              | 20   | Situation found ...     | Doing well.                             |
| XLIV.                                               | 20   | Situation found ...     | Doing well.                             |
| XLV.                                                | 18   | Restored to mother...   | Conduct satisfactory.                   |
| XLVI.                                               | 25   | Returned to husband     | Report extremely good.                  |
| XLVII.                                              | 17   | Sent back to Sweden     | Not known                               |
| XLVIII.                                             | 17   | Sent back to Sweden     | Not known.                              |
| XLIX.                                               | 25   | Now in situation ...    | Doing well.                             |
| L.                                                  | 27   | Now in situation ...    | Doing well.                             |
| LI.                                                 | 28   | Now married ...         | Doing remarkably well.                  |

I have mentioned the above facts with regard to local prisons in order to be able to discuss the Borstal, and Modified Borstal Systems in relation to them.

The Prevention of Crimes Act, of 1908, was an attempt to stem the stream of habitual juvenile offenders, and provided for the committal of boys and girls, between the ages of 16 and 21, to a Borstal Institution for periods of not less than one year (now two years), or more than three years. The offender cannot be convicted summarily, but must be convicted on indictment, or at quarter sessions. Although the prison is called a Borstal Institution, and the girl an inmate, she is really a prisoner under penal discipline.<sup>1</sup> A feature of the scheme is a set of special regulations belonging to the Borstal System. Where these do not apply, the inmate is, in all other respects, under local prison rules. The prison features predominate. A girl may be released on licence after the expiration of three months from the commencement of her term of detention. If released on licence (to the care of the Borstal Association) she must remain on licence for the term for which she was sentenced, and for one year afterwards. If her conduct is unsatisfactory, she may forfeit her licence, and be sent back to the institution. So that a girl is under detention, or supervision for three, to four years.

<sup>1</sup> (1) "Persons sentenced to detention under Penal Discipline in a Borstal Institution."—*Regulations made by the Secretary of State under Section 4 (2) of the Prevention of Crime Act, 1908.*

The majority of girls earn little or nothing off their sentence; a few earn as much as a year. If we compare the Borstal sentences with those of other women, it is evident that they form the great bulk of the severe sentences. In 1921, 269 girls were committed, some for two, some for three years. The total number of adult women who received from 18 months to two years' imprisonment was three. The total number of women convicts who received a three years' sentence was 13. The total number who received over three years was seven. In the great majority of cases of girls, committed to the Borstal Institution, the offence was theft.

The Regulations provide that inmates shall pass through certain grades,<sup>1</sup> called Ordinary, Probation, and Special grades. An intermediate grade has been added between the ordinary and probationary.

The *Ordinary* grade is called in the "Instruc-

<sup>1</sup> (1) Persons.....sentenced to detention under Penal Discipline .....shall be divided into grades proceeding from the ordinary to the special grade where promotion is justified by industry and good conduct.

(2) Promotion will be regulated by the close personal observation of the inmates, attention being specially paid to their general behaviour, their amenability to discipline, and their attention to instruction.—*Regulations made by the Secretary of State under Section 4 (2) of the Prevention of Crime Act, 1908.*

The Progressive Stage System exists in all prisons, and the Grades of the Borstal System are only a variation of it. In speaking of the System in his "The English Prison System," Sir Evelyn Ruggles Brise gives the following explanation:—"The object aimed at was to devise a useful system of progressive reformatory discipline based upon a nice adjustment of the elements of hope and repression, but subject to the principle that the punishment due to the crime is the primary object, and that, consistently with that, no effort to reform should be neglected." (Page 29.)

tions for carrying out the Regulations," the "deterrent or punitive period of detention," and inmates remain in it for three months at least. It is practically the complete prison *régime*.

In the *Intermediate* grade inmates are allowed an extra letter on promotion, and associated exercise and games on Saturdays. This stage also lasts for at least three months.

The *Probationary* grade brings with it meals in association, associated exercise with conversation, and organized games at week-ends, and occasional recreation in the evenings, and inmates do not march in parties to their work. Their cell doors are not locked except at nights. The girl must stay for six months in this grade.

When the girl reaches the special grade at the end of 12 months, her case is specially considered for licence. If she is not licensed, she is transferred to superior quarters, has a special dress, and is allowed to read newspapers. She can earn a good conduct gratuity up to £2, and may spend half of it. She may be paroled, and allowed to work outside the prison.

The Star special grade, or Honour party, may act as monitors, or helpers to the Institution, and wear a special dress.

The Industrial training consists in each girl being, for a few months at a time, on domestic work, which is mainly institution work, and the standard is necessarily low, as no trained instructors are employed. There is farm work

for a few girls, and gardening work also of the lowest labouring variety. Book-keeping and type-writing can also be learnt. School instruction is also given. The whole of the work is at a very low level, and is supervised by the warder staff. The real trade skill or wage-earning capacity acquired by inmates in the institution is not known officially, and is very little, and the teaching is inferior to what is to be had in elementary schools. However, the System permits a certain number of good things to be done if there were any means of doing them.

During my service, the Institution was, except for a short time, governed by a man, assisted by a chaplain, and a staff of working women of the warder class, under a chief matron, now called lady superintendent. The offences that a girl can commit, and can be punished, for—are violence, escape, or attempt, idleness, other offences.

Other offences include prison offences such as insubordination, disrespect, irreverence, bad language, noise, quarrelling, doing damage, giving or receiving or possessing any unauthorised thing, threats, lying, stealing, accusing others, and so on. Some offences are very trivial,<sup>1</sup> such

<sup>1</sup> An inmate shall be guilty of an offence against the Discipline of the Institution if she—

10. Has in her room, or cubicle or dormitory, or in her pockets or clothes, anything she has not been given leave to have. Nothing found on the grounds or on the farm may be picked up and kept.
11. Receives anything from any other inmate, or gives anything to any inmate without leave.
12. Misbehaves herself in any other way.

—*Instructions for carrying out the Regulations under the Prevention of Crime Act, 1908.*

as writing a note, having a scrap of something edible from garden or kitchen, and so on. The discipline, however, is such that no public school, or any other institution where it was important that a code of honour should be maintained, could be carried on under it. Punishments<sup>1</sup> include the ordinary prison dietary punishments, close confinement, degradation from grades, and any other deprivations of privilege the Governor may think fit to make. Acts of violence may be restrained when necessary by handcuffs. In addition to all other punishments and restraints, a special feature of the Borstal System is the Penal Class,<sup>2</sup> which does not exist in any other prison. Whereas other prison punishments have statutory limitations, this has none, except that a prisoner is not to be detained in it "longer than is thought necessary in the interests of himself or others."

A prisoner can be placed in this class if she is "believed to be" exercising a bad influence on others. Degradation to this class may be com-

<sup>1</sup> The Governor may punish by the ordinary prison punishments—  
By deprivation of privileges.  
By degradation to the Penal Class.

<sup>2</sup> The sanction of the system will be the Penal Class. This is an administrative, not a judicial weapon in the hands of the Governor, and whose powers of degradation are unlimited. Strict supervision in rooms and loss of privilege will be a sufficient deterrent for the unruly, combined with such ordinary punishment for occasional offences as the rules admit. Where an inmate is believed to be exercising a bad influence, she shall be placed by the Governor in the Penal Class for such time as the Governor considers necessary in the interest of the inmate herself or others. She will forfeit the privilege of letters and visits.—*Instructions for carrying out the Regulations under the Prevention of Crime Act, 1908.*

bined with other prison punishments, and the prisoner is kept in strict separation, with loss of privilege. She wears the dress of the ordinary or "punitive" grade, and must pass out of the penal class through this grade. While she is in the penal class she can receive no letters nor visits. The Penal Class<sup>1</sup> is also used when girls have forfeited their licences, and have been returned as failures to the institution.

Girls from different grades mix together in the labour parties, under one or another instructor-officer. Girls may be searched at any time, and also their cells—which are called "rooms."

The time-table<sup>2</sup> of the institution is one of its most penal features. Girls rise at 6, and, beginning at 8.15, do a day's labour, of about

<sup>1</sup> Inmates whose licences are revoked, if not removed to a special institution for such cases, will be placed in the penal class for one month, and will work with their room doors open, and will be employed at any suitable form of manual labour. After one month they may, at the discretion of the Governor, be placed in the Ordinary Grade, and will be again removed to the Penal Class if he is satisfied that the inmate is making no real effort to improve.—*Instructions for carrying out the Regulations under the Prevention of Crime Act, 1908.*

<sup>2</sup> Time table for females :—

|      |                                                        |
|------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| 6.0  | a.m.—Inmates rise.                                     |
| 6.30 | " —Clean rooms, boots, &c.                             |
| 7.25 | —Inmates' breakfast.                                   |
| 7.55 | —Chapel.                                               |
| 8.15 | —Labour.                                               |
| 12   | noon.—Drill exercise and inmates' dinner.              |
|      | 1.15.—Labour.                                          |
|      | —Inmates' tea.                                         |
| 5.30 | —Bible Class, choir practice, singing class & bathing. |
| 6.0  | —Silent hour.                                          |
| 7.0  | —Evening labour.                                       |
| 8.0  | —Recreation.                                           |
| 9.30 | —Lights out.                                           |

8½ hours, but the last hour's work is not over until 8 p.m. After this they get, in some grades, and on some evenings, their hour's recreation.

If the System is studied in detail, it will be seen that while privileges are few and far between, the rule is very severe. One year of it, under the prison time-table alone, with no break for holidays, is an ordeal for a strong person. Let us look in detail at the System *qua* System.

[The System is a thing for us all to think about—the result is for all of us to see. On paper the Borstal System looks very well. It expresses the admirable intentions of its promoters, which were to combine penal discipline with suitable education, and with special moral influences. These last are good things—unfortunately it is very easy to combine one poor pennyworth of moral influence, or education, with an intolerable deal of discipline. The provisions for all these are disparate because the System of penal discipline itself necessitates rules of a too stringent kind. If the girl is to move through the various grades she has to put out a great deal of effort. Discipline of a rigid, mechanical, repressive kind is over her everywhere, and she has, before all else, to become *a good and obedient prisoner*.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The System will rest primarily on good discipline firmly but kindly administered. In the obedience which follows from this is the beginning of moral improvement. This being secured, the system admits a wide latitude for trust and confidence in the later stages, whence will spring the sense of honour and self-respect. When this sentiment has been inculcated the purpose of the Act may be said to be fulfilled, namely the reformation of the offender, and, incidentally, the

Unfortunately,—perhaps, in the end, fortunately,—the better the System works, the less it matters to the girl. She is frequently not so childish as the system asks her to be. And she finds that the reward of virtue is, after all, not very great. The Grade System makes an appeal to her by holding out a small bribe of a prettier frock, a little play time, a little money, and possibly, but under conditions of great uncertainty, an earlier discharge on licence. But she threw away more than this when she, of her own free choice, found her way to this prison, and these things only appeal to her through her prison poverty—not morally. When she has been six or nine months, or two years and over in the institution, and has won the privileges, and either kept them, or fallen down again to the bottom, and even into the penal class—she gives the grades up. She regards grade as the most annoying of her circumstances, entailing as it does, a possible fall, and another weary climbing of the ladder towards freedom.

When the Institution Board studies her “individually,” it studies all that it has to study—a good or bad prisoner. A girl may pass through all the grades in due order, and yet her character may be no more affected than it might

repression of crime, for, if the criminal habit be arrested at the beginning, the supply of criminals in the later stage of their career is effectively stopped.—*English Prison System: E. Ruggles-Brise. Extract from Memorandum to the Governor of Aylesbury Borstal Institution for Females (page 256).*

be by her taking a course of comparative anatomy, or an examination in jig-saw puzzles. She may remain a thief, a liar, and a prostitute, at the end of it. Conversely, she may be a troublesome prisoner, and flounder about in the lower grades until the time comes when she must be discharged, and yet do no worse in the end than another—possibly as well.

Again, grade and prison punishments are incompatible. If a girl is punished by degradation in grade, it becomes one of the hardest of her prison punishments. If she has to be punished by prison punishments while in an advanced grade, or has to forfeit privileges belonging to the grade while in it, the moral effect of grade is badly discounted, it becomes absurd. Then, again, the Grade System obliges the prison administration to abide by it as a classification for all comers. The multiplication of parties is, at any time, large and complicated. Grade absolutely bars the way to an effective classification of inmates according to character, education, antecedents, or any rational separation and treatment of individuals.

The grade a girl is in, if she behaves well, depends entirely on prison "industry and good conduct," not on her degree of real improvement, real trustworthiness, or real fitness to earn her living honestly. She has no scope for giving evidence of these qualities.

So far as a prison system is called "pro-

gressive" let us remember that the girl's own real progress is the only thing that counts, and she must have *room* for improvement.

The Penal Class is equally ineffective. When a girl reaches the Ordinary or punitive Grade by degradation, she practically puts herself back in prison. Prison punishments can still reach her, or she can be sent away to finish her time in a local prison. The Penal Class belongs to the era of the dunce's cap, and the pillory. It is a public degradation. Other girls, new and old, contemplate it, and sympathise with the subject of it. It is a vindictive punishment, without real relation to the discipline of the prison.

The Regulations of the Borstal System always remind one of the trotting matches at the Coliseum in which the horse remains stationary and the stage revolves. When the floor goes away from under us, our labour to progress is in vain—we are not getting anywhere. Only our girl does not remain stationary. Whatever we may do with her body, *she* goes away. Where she goes, we, who have her body in fast keeping, do not always realize. I hope to show where, in a future chapter.

Meantime, let us look for the external evidence that the System has to offer us, as to results. The Borstal System is, after all, our last word in prisons. It is a matter of pride to many that we have this special treatment of the young delinquent. Does it reform her? This System

appears especially to stand or fall by its results. The old is an admitted failure. The only thing that can justify the State in detaining young citizens for long periods of time which, by all comparisons, are disproportionate to the gravity of their offences, is being able to show adequate results. A System is bound to give value. That value, in the case of the Borstal System, cannot be expressed in mere detention, which could be done in a local prison at much less cost than in a penal institution. It cannot be expressed as the advantage to society and the individual of keeping a wild girl shut up away from harm. She will never be missed from disorderly circles, and the streets. The System must express itself by its power to make the subject of it sufficiently honest, moral, or self-controlled to enable her to keep out of prison.

We may, perhaps, compare it with the Modified Borstal System, which is carried out in local prisons. This system was introduced gradually into local prisons, and was in good going order before the war. The only figures available are those published by the Prison Commissioners,<sup>1</sup> in which they show that, of 41 girl juvenile-adults, between 16 and 21 years of age, discharged after serving a sentence of four months or over, only one was known to have been re-convicted.

Again in a series of 219 girls discharged after serving sentences of over one and under four

<sup>1</sup> Report of the Prison Commissioners, 1910-11.

months, only one in five was re-convicted. I have alluded to my observation that smart sentences of this length are liable to deter offenders, but, whatever the figures really prove, they may be compared with those of a series of girls discharged from Aylesbury Borstal Institution.<sup>1</sup> Out of 132 girls discharged on licence, during three years and three months, one in three (nearly one in four) had been re-convicted. The results quoted from local prisons are, therefore, better than those quoted from Aylesbury. I may say that the material is very much the same.

No such list of successes has been shown from Aylesbury as that I have quoted on pp. 150-151.

The following figures show that, as the years have passed, there has been little improvement to show in the Borstal results. They are all that are published.

Of 87 girls released on licence, January, 1910, to March 31, 1913 (three years and three months)—

|                         |        |        |
|-------------------------|--------|--------|
| Reported unsatisfactory | ...    | 1 in 3 |
| Re-convicted            | ... .. | 1 in 4 |

Of 45 girls released on licence, 1913-14—

|                         |        |        |
|-------------------------|--------|--------|
| Reported unsatisfactory | ...    | 1 in 5 |
| Re-convicted            | ... .. | 1 in 7 |

—*Report of the Commissioner of Prisons, 1913-14, page 19.*

In 1914 the period of punishment and of supervision was extended.

<sup>1</sup> "The English Prison System," E. Ruggles-Brise, page 119.

Of 48 girls released on licence, 1919-20—

|                         |        |                 |
|-------------------------|--------|-----------------|
| Reported unsatisfactory | ...    | 1 in 3          |
| Re-convicted            | ... .. | 1 in 6          |
|                         |        | (nearly 1 in 7) |
| Licence revoked         | ... .. | 1 in 4          |
|                         |        | (nearly 5)      |

—See *Report of the Borstal Association, 1919-20.*

Of 85 girls released on licence, 1920-21—

|                                  |        |        |
|----------------------------------|--------|--------|
| Reported unsatisfactory          | ...    | 1 in 5 |
| Re-convicted                     | ... .. | 1 in 4 |
| Forfeited licences (among these) |        | 40     |

Of the 40 girls who had previously forfeited their licences—

|                         |        |        |
|-------------------------|--------|--------|
| Reported unsatisfactory | ...    | 1 in 5 |
| Re-convicted            | ... .. | 1 in 3 |

—See *Report of the Borstal Association, 1920-21.*

If the above lists prove anything they prove that the longer the time spent in the institution the greater the number of re-convictions. Another way of putting it would be to say the naughtier the girl the longer time, and the greater the number of re-convictions.

The naughtiness of the girl may, however, be taken for granted. We are concerned only with the effect of the system on her.

The Report of the Borstal Association for last year, 1920, showed that out of 48 girls discharged on licence during the year, 27 were "satisfactory so far." "So far" might mean any period from a day to a year, and some of these would in all

probability fail. Twenty-one had failed, and were unsatisfactory. Seven, or one-third of these, had been re-convicted before the expiry of their licence.

The cost of prisoners has of late years varied considerably, but last year (1920) the cost of a girl was £148 17s. 11d. Really it was more. Therefor the 27 girls on licence had cost about £4,050, while the 21 unsatisfactory had cost £3,126, or estimated in "satisfactoriness," it had cost £7,177 a year to obtain the 27 girls "satisfactory so far."

If most of them were at Aylesbury more than a year, and the cost of those returned with licence revoked is included, as well as of escorts, outfits, and so on, it is evident that the cost of the institution is enormous. The real numbers permanently rescued seems to be unknown.

Let us now try to judge the value of the System by the conduct of its inmates.

I have said that the conduct in local prisons is, on the whole, very good. Nearly all girls on the longer local sentences behave well. It was an exceedingly rare thing for a girl to be put out of the Modified Borstal Class or to forfeit marks. A great many were known to me before they went to Aylesbury, and I saw some of them again in prison after they were entirely free of the supervision of the Borstal Association, when their behaviour was not so good, but generally good.

A table will show the tendency of prisoners to

misbehave under the various systems, and the proportion of their punishments.

### YEAR 1921.

|                       | Local Prisons. | Convicts. | Borstal,<br>Aylesbury. |
|-----------------------|----------------|-----------|------------------------|
| Total women prisoners | 14,557,        | 106       | 269                    |
|                       |                |           | nearly                 |
| Total punished ...    | 1 in 44        | 1 in 7    | 1 in 2                 |
| Punished for violence | 1 in 766       | 1 in 26   | 1 in 2                 |
| Put in irons ...      | 1 in 3639      | None      | 1 in 8                 |
| Other punishments...  | 560            | 50        | 563                    |

From the above it will be seen that the punishments of the Borstal girls were nearly equal to those of all the other 14,394 prisoners. In 1921, an exceptional year, girls were put in irons more often than all other prisoners, women and men put together. Of the Borstal boys, who were five times as many in number, only one in 226 was put in irons, as against one in eight girls.

The offences of the girls included :—Violence, 111; escapes or attempts, 3; idleness, 6; other offences, 304.

No one will question that the conduct of these girls was exceptionally bad. Its cause is next to seek. It is plain that they did their long and dull day's work. Only six were punished for idleness. Their other offences call for no comment here. Their violence was on the whole phenomenal. What was the reason?

## CHAPTER XI

### PSYCHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The attitude of each one of us towards life depends on how life has treated us, and how we have found ourselves able to treat it. In times of stress as in all other times, it is attitude that tells.

Few of the young people who come under the Borstal System have had the preparation for their maturing life that was their due, and which the community ought to have provided for them; few have had the protection which should counter-balance their inevitable inexperience.

The girl has had, perhaps, from early years, to fight for her own hand in the best way she could. Her attitude is influenced by what has happened to her, and what she has seen happening in her rather primitive world. The spectacle of much of the married life she has observed has not especially prejudiced her in its favour. Seduction or temptation have been round her every corner. Bars to employment for which she feels herself apt, low wages which she feels to be unjust, the little she possesses to make any bargain with except herself, and the fact that she has already got on the wrong side of the general social approval through her excursions in the police courts, are all factors that cause her to

regard the social structure with suspicion and dislike. She can fulfil her wants and needs as well without social approval, indeed, since she is confronted with a blank wall at so many turnings—better. She decides on the course of “living without the law,” and fights for, or bargains foolishly for, or takes what she cannot otherwise come by. All these, and many other considerations, based on her individual experiences and reflections, may contribute to bring her to her long detention in a hostile attitude towards those who have forced her into it. She comes to her place of punishment not in the least of the mind of those into whose hands she has fallen. She is not rejecting their point of view, but she has never seen it. They are her captors, therefore her enemies. Until they, for their part, have ascertained her attitude, how, exactly, she regards life in general, and her own problems in relation to it, until they have ascertained whether she understands anything at all of their point of view, or of what they have to say to her, they have little to say to her. If they say much they may easily miss their mark. Next, they will have to ascertain what is the real connection between this girl’s theory of life, and that pair of boots that she stole. She has come to the place of penal discipline that it may be shown to her. She will argue that three months’ imprisonment has paid before, and ought to have paid this time for the boots, and that the balance of her three years’

sentence is unjust. Someone has to succeed in showing her that it is not. Then someone has to convince her that there is a better way of getting boots, and had perhaps better ascertain also whether, since she is interested in boots, she would like to make, instead of steal them.

Someone has to find out what her tastes, and inclinations, best aspirations, and capacities are. Until these have been duly reckoned-up, it will not be possible to offer her a sincere vocational guidance. Then someone has to be able to tell her what she is worth or may become worth in wages, how and where she can compete most successfully, when free again, for an honest living; what so-called "trade" she should study or acquire, and (incidentally, but of the highest importance) in what ways all her lawful desires can best be fulfilled. One thing certain is, that, if she is to become a good citizen, she must be both ready and able to pay her way, whether her discharge is coming about when she is 19, or 24-years old. Lastly, someone has to succeed in explaining to her the connection of penal discipline, and the grade system with her future life. And, as she is generally a reasoning being, this may prove a stiff proposition. It is certain that, if, thus late, she is going to be equipped for a struggle for a decent existence, experts must come to her rescue. Before she can be prepared for a "trade" her special senses, special defects, nervous system, and mental state must be over-

hauled. Not until then, can her educators know what it is best to teach her. Not until her teachers have, also, given skilled attention to her case can it be known how she can earn her bread. In the Borstal Institution she has plenty of time before her. In two or three years you can get far in preparing for most trades—or even for learned professions. But in addition to finding her vocation, she has to find herself, and her reasons for behaving herself, and turning into a good citizen. Highly-paid technical skill is necessary to her there. She has to come again into touch with the herd-morality of the largest herd from which she has been short-circuited. How is your hard-worked prison officer, who is doing a laborious eight hours' day on a party of 30 of her like, going to show her that? How is anyone, who has only a modest amount of time, and knowledge to spend on her going to show her anything? It is no light task for the greatest expert to orientate, and enlighten a neglected soul, at 16 or 21, and it takes an expert, indeed, to set an unmoulded and primitive creature, who has thrown over the law, upon the path to character, to moral autonomy, to individuality, in two or three short years.

I once had a conversation with a girl who, after a long trial in the Borstal Institution, was sent to finish her sentence in a local prison. In the local prison she behaved as well as she had behaved badly in the Borstal. I asked her to tell me

about her offence. She said it was forging a 10/- treasury note. She was very good at drawing, and had copied the note (one of the red ones), as a joke. Another girl urged her to make a better copy, which she did. Then they thought they would try to pass it, and did so, at the rather dark pay-desk of a cinema. Much excited by this easy way of making money, she made and passed another copy. This time she was caught and sentenced. I asked her if she had intended to cheat anyone? She said, "No." She thought if they would take the note no harm was done. "*They got the note.*" I asked her if she knew why we were using notes? She did not. I asked her if she knew where all the gold money was? She did not. I asked her if she knew that every note represented a piece of money that was being kept safe somewhere? She did not. I explained to her that other notes had value, but that hers had no money behind it, and was only a piece of paper—and that the people who owned it could not get money for it. Then she saw what her offence was. I said I felt sure that the judge who tried her, or someone, had explained to her *why* forging notes was a crime, but she declared that no one had ever explained it to her—or spoken to her about forging at all. This is typical of the knowledge of a great many young prisoners of the crimes they commit. Several times young prisoners have said to me: "I oughtn't to be here at all, the judge himself said

it was false pretences !” By this they meant that the pretences by which they had secured food or lodgings were not *real pretences*. But I said : “ You did have the things, after saying you could pay.” “ Yes, ma’am, so I did, but I only owed the money ; I was going to pay.” Such things are not of criminal attitude and intention, but of nimble and bad reasoning, and the bad-will of the prisoner is too easily taken for granted, in estimating her character and offence. What could the System do for a girl who did not even realize the nature of her offence ?

Let us go with the girl to her detention and see its effect upon her. She has just waited in prison for her trial, has been sentenced, and is brought to Aylesbury. She arrives suffering from some degree of shock, and is usually fairly subdued.

She goes for at least three months into the “ punitive ” ordinary grade. She does not come as to a school, where she is going to learn about life and conduct, but as an ordinary prisoner. The idea appears to be that she is to learn obedience here, and that upon this foundation trust, and self-respect will grow. Willing obedience is a fine quality under some circumstances, but the passive obedience of the slave, fed, clothed, supervised, ordered about, and unpaid for her labour, is a mechanical and valueless thing. For these three months obedience is almost the highest virtue that her prison life

allows her to show. She has generally been to prison before, and it is not prison life that dismays her. But nothing can make the prospect of two or three years' imprisonment anything but a shock, and a severe trial to an adolescent girl (or boy). For this girl (or boy) it is probably a greater ordeal than it might be for those in better circumstances who have lived in a state of tutelage until adolescence, or even later. This girl, if not mature, is not a child. She may have been respectably brought up, or have come from some slum in a large town. She may have been under her parents' roof until now, or may have been living independently, and paying her way for several years. She is, in the great majority of cases, accustomed to sexual relations. She may be the mother of one child or more. She may be better educated than her prison teachers, and able to earn more money than they can teach her to earn.

Sometimes her sentence has separated her from a lover or *fiancé*, or she is in dread that she will be deserted, and in grief because she will not be able to write or receive enough letters to keep really in touch with those she loves.<sup>1</sup> Some-

<sup>1</sup> An inmate will be allowed at the Governor's discretion to write and receive letters, and have visits as follows:—

In the Ordinary and Intermediate Grade—every six weeks.

Probationary Grade (*this is after at least six months*)—every month.

In the Special Grade (*this is after at least a year*)—visits monthly, letters fortnightly.

—*Instructions for carrying out the Regulations under the Prevention of Crime Act, 1908.*

times she has the reproach of having wounded and disgraced her family. With all her feelings on edge, with the conflicting emotions of shame and self-justification, depression and bravado, inferiority and defiance at war within her, in amazement at finding herself thus torn up by all her young roots, she is in a sorry plight, and is a subject for delicate and skilled approach by those who would know her attitude towards them, and show her theirs towards her.

And this calamity has overtaken her just at the period when judgment and experience should begin to teach her something of life. It is, above all things, important that she should, in these adolescent years, learn to accept and adapt herself to community standards, to come to her full mental stature as a woman, and learn those lessons which no penal discipline, but only life in the world can teach her.

Certainly it may be necessary that the wilful and uncontrolled should be brought under control, and should suffer some degree of loss of liberty for their own, and their neighbours' sakes. But are our ideas so poverty-stricken that we can take no other way with this girl than to deprive her of all her personal liberty, to create for her more offences than she could commit in an ordinary school, to subject her to continual reports and punishments, and to penal discipline, with the degrading feature of the penal class—to make of her a chattel, not even self-support-

ing, and to place her under a set of more or less trivial regulations which force her into an institution mould. Can character, personality, or even a disposition to refrain from crime, develop in any such soil? Let us see its effect upon her, and how her attitude is affected by the system.<sup>1</sup>

Modern psychology, in its practical aspect, has little to say about brains and intelligence—it is based on a study of the primitive instincts and emotions. A prison, on the other hand, has no use for the emotions; expressions of feeling are as much out of place as pistols would be: the prisoner's part is to do as she is told, and consume her own smoke. In practical psychology the adjustment of the individual to life depends upon mental and emotional balance. If a person is "wrong-headed" his cure is as often as not via his heart, or vice versa. This brings me to a vital part of my subject. It is one of extreme difficulty, and may, in places, be too technical for every reader to be able to follow it. But it is in great need of understanding, and supplies deep reasons for our re-consideration of our whole penal system. It will, I believe, one day furnish us with the key that will unlock all prison doors, and free many captives from many prisons of their own making.

One of the most common states of mental debility or illness, which is always associated with

<sup>1</sup> The Borstal Officers do an eight hours' day on the girl, who does a 15½ hours' day on them.

emotional stress, is hysteria. We had an unparalleled opportunity of studying this condition during the war when numbers of people were under severe emotional stress. It was seen in many brave and efficient soldiers who, more or less suddenly, became victims of shell shock, and other disabling neuroses. There is plenty of it in all societies, and as it is highly dangerous, if untreated, to the integrity of the personality, and apt to supervene in people of great value to the community, it should never be lightly regarded.<sup>1</sup>

It is produced by predisposition, and can occur in attacks under the stress of mental conflicts, of which the patient is unaware. The condition may affect the whole state of the patient, and may sometimes leave considerable mental injuries in its train. It is made worse by occasions of emotion, solitude, repression, lack of interest, fatigue, stress, shock, and punishment. Since girls (and boys) sent to Borstal Institutions come up against one or more of these conditions, and since many also suffer from physical contributing factors, such as ill-health of various kinds, or alcoholic cravings, and also from repression of sex instincts, or of desire for certain foods, from lack of exercise, from loss of friends, and fellowship, and from loss of liberty, from

<sup>1</sup> See chapters on "The Mechanism of Hysteria," by E. Prigadeaux, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.; "Repression and Suppression," by W. H. K. Rivers, M.D.; "Regression," by Maurice Nicholl, M.B., F.R.C.S.; "Functional Nerve Disease," Edited by H. Crichton Miller, M.D., 1920.

severe anxieties, as well as from repression of the predatory or fighting instincts, which through misuse have got them into trouble, they are, when placed under strict penal discipline, in especial danger of falling a prey to hysteria. Whatever the factors which they, as individuals, bring to the production of this pathological state, the prison, by shutting down the instinctive life, and setting the heavy weight of penal discipline on the safety valve, unquestionably plays the larger part. The prison holds the prisoner in a state of emotional stress and mental conflict. As has been pointed out by other writers, it is not the imprisonment itself, but the psychic result of the imprisonment that does the mischief.

In the free world there are people whose lives are extremely circumscribed, whose orbit is almost as small, whose poverty and deprivations are as great, or greater than those of the prisoner. These people, as long as they are not forced by life into emotional conflicts, suffer no injuries from their limitations. With the young prisoner it is quite otherwise. Her aggressive, and combative, and acquisitive, and sex instincts have all been sharpened by use in her rough-and-tumble world, and when she arrives in this place, where she has no use for any of them, she is soon in a state of considerable emotional tension. She is cut off from her world; she is, against her will, obliged to fit into an exacting mechanism which

gives no scope for individual choices or tastes, or interests; she may own next to nothing, may love nobody, may have no personal privacy, can be overhauled, searched, punished. Her choices are practically limited to obeying, or disobeying orders. She, who has, perhaps, never in all her life slept in a room alone, is locked up every night for nine or ten hours. In her cell or "room" she may rage, or cry, or suffer her personal pains dumbly. She quickly settles down among her fellows, and her first reactions are seen in her movements and attitudes, and in a defiant flouncing walk, and manner of obeying orders. In the period when she is better having as little of her own society in her cell as possible, she has the most of it, and eats alone, and may not talk. If she does not get peacefully through her first three months of this discipline, she will have more of it. She soon, unconsciously to herself, represses what is painful to her. She does not occupy herself with the dreary affairs of the Institution, or her mind with the easy work that is spread over a long day. She broods and fancies, or (as science spells it) phantasies her world, not as it is, but as she would like it to be. The realities of her life are hateful to her—she thrusts them out of consciousness. In their place she dreams of the life that she knows and likes, or she builds-on to this life that she likes, a second chapter to be lived by and by. But there is no reality in these phantasies; they are

retrospective or prospective pictures of life only. In a few weeks her cell becomes the place where she can indulge her dreams, and where the wishes that she cannot realize in real life, come true. Her inner world becomes more real and vivid to her. Her face begins to "set"; she no longer flounces when she walks. The stage is already revolving without her. She is going away. Supposing that this is all that happens to her. Is one, or two, or three years of this going to make her abstain from crime?

But this is frequently not all that happens. Presently you may see the "effect of discipline" on her. She begins to get mechanical over her work, although she may go briskly about it, and may settle down to the remorseless time-table. When the Inspector asks about her conduct the reply is that she is not very bright, but "keeps on," or "plods." This is the good prisoner. She is tractable, she gets no reports. Later, when she is thoroughly passive, she will be noted as a rather slow and stupid girl, and will get the slow and stupid work that suits her. At her ironing table her pre-occupied face might deceive you into thinking she is absorbed in her work, if you did not know that she is hardly there, is thinking of something else, is only returning to her ironing table at intervals.

You may see her on Sunday sitting in chapel in her pretty frock, apparently listening with a serious face, or singing earnestly. Is she there

at all? No. She is eating chocolates in a music-hall, with Alf, or is under a bush in Richmond Park with Bert, or is having the Sunday dinner of steak and onions at home, or is buying a new hat trimmed with pink, or is wondering who Bill is going to take out instead of herself on Bank Holiday, and what she will say when he tells lies about it, and she finds him out—in two years' time. You have her here and are drilling her, but she is not even listening to you. She is living her aching longings in phantasy. If they are no worse than the above you have something, at least, to be thankful for. She may go through her whole term of imprisonment like this. The Inspector hears that she is inattentive, and takes no interest in anything. No one can imagine what work will suit her when she leaves, on her discharge. She seems to have no likes or dislikes.

If passivity holds the field, she may reach the Special Grade, and you may know nothing of her attitude towards you, or towards life. One day, towards the end of her term of detention, she may suddenly steal something, or break parole, and you are reminded that the "good prisoner" and the good girl are two different people.

Perhaps she is a girl who takes things more hardly, or has less self-control, or who is a more active and lively person than the one described above. When her world of phantasy is establishing itself you may find that she becomes nervous

and "jumpy." She is recalled to the real world in the prison which she hates. The first symptom of her hysteric tendency lies in this absorption in her phantasies, and difficulty in changing over to reality. For she now has two worlds to attend to, the one where she gives her own orders, and the one to which she is sharply recalled by her officer's orders. She needs agility of mind, and a perfect temper, to make these adaptations. She may become curiously variable in her emotional moods, and at the same time the demands upon her ever-shifting attention and interest, make her extremely suggestible by herself and others. At this point her response to suggestion may deceive those in charge of her into thinking she is going to do well.

She comes more and more to disregard the prison life, to touch it only on the surface, to despise it rather openly. The system treats her as a child, by making no appeals to her as an adult, responsible woman. She has a "silly" stage, affects a childish attitude, plays the buffoon, giggles and upsets others, and is herself easily upset. Phantasy also comes more to the surface. She puts on affected manners, and ways of speaking, puts on her clothes in eccentric ways, does her hair in common styles, shows a want of simplicity, and generally plays the little ape. She tries her class-teacher's patience severely. When the Inspector tells her she is playing the fool, she confesses that her temper

gets the better of her, and that she "can't bear herself for irritation," and does not otherwise know "why she is so silly." At other times she owns, pathetically, that she "*fancies things*, and then gets into trouble." The unconscious now has her fairly firmly in its grip.

As the conflict between her real world and her unconscious wishes increases, she identifies her gaolers with her misfortunes. She decides to "get a bit of her own back." She is insubordinate, or mischievously, or gratuitously does some monkey-trick, and is insolent when called to order. She is reported and punished, and

<sup>1</sup> Nervous disorders of one kind or another are, as one would expect, important influences in mental life, causing peculiarities which may lead to test results that can readily be confused with special defect, hence differential diagnosis becomes of exceeding importance. This is notably true in cases of hysteria because of the reactions which characterise this nervous disease.\* Janet and other authors agree that in practically all cases of hysteria there is great variability in the functioning of the mental processes, that want of mental unity and deficiency of inhibition are essential features of the disorder. There is often extreme dissociation in the mental life, and lack of control of both the emotions and of voluntary actions. The contradictory behaviour to which this leads is a notable accompaniment of the disease. Frequently, too, there is simulation, so that the reactions of such persons are altogether unreliable.

"These characteristic symptoms are such that when diagnosis of hysteria has been made, it becomes extremely dangerous to designate the individual as feeble-minded on the basis of tests. There are, indeed, two aspects that must be remembered in this problem. On the one hand it is not contended by any authority that the diagnosis of hysteria can be made on the basis of mental tests alone, but, on the other hand, the best authorities would equally as unwillingly state that mental tests are not affected by hysteria. Remembering the mental states of hystericals as described by Janet and others, it is to be expected that this disease will influence greatly the results of the psychological examination. The poor powers of control, together with definite inhibitions which sometimes occur, the dissociations and simulations, frequently, if not always, play a good rôle in the mental findings."—Bronner. "*The Psychology of Special Abilities and Disabilities*," 1921 (page 29).

\* Janet, Pierre. "The Major Symptoms of Hysteria," 1907.

realizes that all that has happened is to her, and she has a set-back from the time of release on licence; she is, however, not now in a condition to profit by the descent of consequences. Those who "have a down on her" are to blame, and she has done nothing wrong. She will give them something to report her for next time. In her phantasy life she is something more free and more powerful—she knows more about this and that than her teachers. She laughs at orders.

She may remain in this stage of smouldering resistance for some time, indeed, the reason why these cases remain so long undiagnosed is that the patient herself often makes heroic efforts to maintain the balance, and self-control which she feels is slipping away from her, and which is, indeed, now seriously threatened. Perhaps she has, up to now, not done anything very disorderly. She may only have lost "time," or fallen once or twice in grade. If she leaves the institution in this stage, unless her release brings about a speedy improvement in her attitude, she may soon be returned with her licence revoked. *Her facility, suggestibility, and changeableness of mood soon bring about some fall, or she may enact the phantasied second chapter of her old life in response to her unredeemed desires, repeating her old offences.*

Kindness and patience will not heal such an illness when once it has taken shape. A lady who was for a short time at Aylesbury as

instructor, and whose observation of the girls was very accurate, told me how she dealt with such cases.

On one occasion she saw a girl begin to boil under discipline orders. She went to her at her wash-tub and spoke to her in a whisper. The girl replied, "I *am* trying to control myself, but I feel as if I should just go mad." The Instructor said: "Hold on, child, and come and be interested in something." She then pointed out, to a little group, the iridescent colours in the soap-bubbles, and told them about the composition of soaps, and about the question as to what made different colours in different soaps. The storm passed, and the girl thanked her gratefully.

But more is necessary than skilfully distracting a patient. The destructive process must be treated, for it is as dangerous, or may be as dangerous to the subject of it, as plague, or typhoid fever.

The ordinary opinion about such a prisoner, whose self-control is failing, is, that she is a bad-tempered, wilful girl, who wants her own way, and lashes out when she cannot get it. Yet prisoners' own repeated observations should call attention to their abnormal state. "I can't think what makes me so bad tempered here. I'm not like this at home."

Let us follow our girl a step farther on her down grade. She gets more and more self-centred, difficult, and irritable, until at last, a

check, or an order, sets a match to a train of gunpowder. She is reported and punished, and again there is another climb to be done up the long ladder to freedom. The girl says she is "fed up" and will not be punished for nothing. Her unconscious wishes explode. She breaks out in a fury, and smashes anything she can lay hands on, or assaults someone. She projects her wishes to destroy her prison, and her gaolers, upon her furniture, clothing, and even on herself. She may wound, and permanently injure herself, or bring about her own death, and the really protean nature of her illness and suffering is then, of course, sufficiently apparent. Her anarchic conduct may materialize irrespective of disciplinary correction, but following some access of emotion, *e.g.*, a letter from home has been an exciting cause. She is especially prone to these attacks in her room, that strait and narrow gateway to the world where her destructive wishes come true. As she has now become dangerous to herself and others, she may be restrained in the body-belt, an instrument of leather and handcuffs. After, say, 12 or 24 hours, or longer, in this, she may become amenable, and then emerges quiet, beaten, and inwardly defiant. Presently will come another, and yet another outbreak.

Meantime, other girls under the same limitations and stresses as herself, and in the same suggestible condition, who have seen, perhaps, how troublesome and distressing such scenes are

to those in charge of them, may follow suit on the very limited lines at their disposal. An epidemic of neuromimesis is, however, simply a proof of the number of highly emotional, and very sick girls who are under the influence of the same severe conflicts, and states of mental and physical high pressure.

It is needless to say that, if they are in any stage of hysteria, light or serious, all hope of influencing these girls through the standards of the life that they are up against, and which is becoming more and more unreal to them, is in abeyance for the period of their illness, which is much more easily induced than cured.

In some cases violent outbreaks do not occur, but the phantasies of the prisoner are expended on extraordinarily detailed and plausible stories, and elaborate frauds and deceptions, or cunning thefts. Some of these they expend in the prison, and some upon the public soon after their discharge. These fertile wish-fulfilments often turn a fresh, and exaggerated page in the individual's criminal career, and I am never surprised to find the Aylesbury hysteric again in prison on account of a fresh crime. The crime belongs to the phantastic world which she created while in prison, and which became reality for her. And this particular variety of facile crime, born of pathological suggestibility, often appears to me to be the signal for an access of deeper mental dissociation in the individual who commits it.

Naturally all prisoners do not react to repression in the same way or degree, and the picture I have drawn includes a number of stages which may represent the condition of a number of girls. But I believe that the 111 cases of violence, of which 33 ended by restraint of the girl by handcuffs last year, were not due to any other cause than a pathological state induced by the character of the disciplinary conditions which we impose in our prisons, and under which it is hopeless to engender the attitude which will lead to what has been hopefully designated as the "arrest of the criminal habit."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sir E. Ruggles-Brise, K.C.B., "The English Prison System," p. 244, par. 2.

## CHAPTER XII

### DEFEATED ENDS

The conditions of emotional stress, which result in the loss of mental balance, which I have described in the foregoing chapter, are, of course, not peculiar to prisoners under long sentences. We are, in one sense, all "borderland" cases, confronted with choices that are hard, or the loss of freedom to choose, which is harder, living, at times, on the edge of difficulties that are too much for us. Unless we are able to make, and are free to make the necessary changes in attitude and conduct required of us as life proceeds, repression, and loss of interest may injure any of us. Nothing makes it easy or healthy for any of us to live in a state of enforced passivity, waiting for an opportunity to expend our energies again; a day spent in a railway carriage can sometimes tell us that, and nothing makes it easy to do anything or to live in any way that is violently against the grain; a meal of something that we utterly dislike will tell us that. The free man or woman, however, is, in all this, in a very different position from the captive. It is certain that the reason why the ordinary local prisoner does not get the severe mental symptoms that I have described, is, that in her

short detention she has only to go a very short way from reality. Next week, or next month she will be free. It is not worth while to get up strong feeling over such a small matter as doing a trifle of "time." She does not hate her prison or get neurotic over it. She adapts herself comfortably to both her worlds. If I appear to make light of her eccentricities and her incorrigibility, it is because I think her *prison life* is seldom at the root of them. I do not, of course, make light of the initial damage to her social outlook done by sending her, as a young girl, to prison under the brutal circumstances that I have described in earlier chapters, but penal discipline, at any rate, has not harmed her seriously in the local prison.

There is not much doubt that the explanation of that fine salvage list of delinquent girls to which I have referred, was the result of the understanding of some of their simple human needs. They were induced to take a look at a life other than their own. They made the choice which put them in a place of safety, and were, therefore, not living under the cardinal stress, loss of liberty. Human friendship followed them, tokens of remembrance and motherly interest, visitors, and birthday letters, and gifts came to them, and from numerous small beginnings, well kept-up, the developed affection, fired ambition, and educated outlook were born, which led them to prefer a decent life to that from which they had been rescued.

But the young criminal is put in conditions which give her no real scope for self-direction and self-development, or for contact with the personal touch which may mean so much.

Hardly anyone, except a few medical men, realize that upon the boy or girl, man or woman taken by force and confined under our penal discipline, *consequences descend in response to natural laws* which we are powerless to counter-act. If we hold people captive under certain conditions, the results will certainly appear. All down the history of imprisonment they have confronted us if we would have looked at them. Yet in 1922 our discipline, and restraint of prisoners under it, is about as humane or scientific as to render a caged animal irritable and savage by confinement, and then to treat its irritability, or nervous exasperation by tying it up and beating it. If we do not beat our women, we do beat our men. One can, of course, master a living creature by restraining it, as we do when we place the girl in the body belt with handcuffs, or by ill-treating it, as we do when we flog a violent man. But we cannot tame, or teach it thus. Man, the most untameable in spirit of all creatures, cannot be reduced to submission by any such means. He can be held so tightly in confinement that he explodes, as he occasionally does, in a paroxysm of nervous excitement, or until his mental condition calls aloud for enquiry, but the one thing that he will not do, under this treatment, is change

his point of view, or abandon the crime upon which we have merely caused him to focus his unconscious desires.

The huge proportion of uncured and undeterred criminals which we have always had to show for our methods, is a sufficient proof of the failure of our penal system.

It is not infrequently made a matter of comment that so few "mentally defective" prisoners are certifiable, or certified under the Act of 1913 which provides for the detention of these persons. This is not the fault of the Act, but rather the fault of those who have classed the whole genus of troublesome and psychotic prisoners under this heading. The result of my observations of those cases known in prisons as "feeble-minded" is to convince me that we are seldom dealing with congenitally mentally defective persons. In some cases we are dealing with persons whose passivity suggests early dementia praecox, but in the vast majority of cases we are, in my opinion, dealing with hysteroid or paranoid psychoses.

It is possible, indeed probable, that all such conditions do not originate in prison. Many young prisoners may have been in adverse circumstances which have been producing in them severe mental conflicts, for a long time. These circumstances may be responsible for their first adventures in crime. Some repressive, over-fatiguing, or under-stimulating conditions of life, may have initiated the neurosis. All such

neuroses are probably of slow and insidious growth.

But, as far as I could ascertain, many of the girls had shown no signs of mental or emotional upset until they came under their long Borstal sentence. They were well behaved in local prisons, where a four or six months' sentence did not appear to disturb their equilibrium, but, in the same period of time in the Borstal Institution, while the girl was still in the lowest or lower grades, she might have broken out with crude manifestations of loss of control.

A hysterical girl under the influence of drink is sometimes sent to prison for some act of violence such as assaulting the police, but such feats are uncommon at the early ages over 16 and under 21.

The most recent Judicial Statistics, 1919,<sup>1</sup> show that assaults of all kinds taken together, are five times as common among women between 21 and 30, as they are between 16 and 21. They are about four times as many between 30 and 40, and just under four times as many between 40 and 60.

Really quarrelsome and dangerous women only come before the courts at the later ages, when their mental state is more deeply pathological. I have no doubt that, when imprisoned over long periods, these women become more dangerous to themselves and others than they are

<sup>1</sup> Table XII., Section B, page 43.



Survival of the Fittest

*Older women of fair mental type*



Younger women going mentally downhill

in free life. Numerous instances of those whose illness was other than purely hysterical were to be seen in the State Inebriate Reformatory. These were the cream of a collection of incorrigible women, usually middle-aged or elderly, who had been committed under the Inebriates' Acts, but whose drunkenness was only an item in their disorderly life. They were older, stronger, more reprobate, and more battered than the Aylesbury girls who were children in comparison.

But the mental states of both kinds of prisoner had many things in common, and the elder prisoners connected up with the younger through the extent to which they showed themselves victims of suggestibility and phantasy. They were like a photograph enlarged from a clear snapshot.

Among the most marked cases the nervous explosion was not always through insubordination, or physical violence. Their phantasies were much less concealed than in the case of younger prisoners, and wandering, dreaming aloud, or talking to themselves or joking or singing, sometimes took the place of more objectionable behaviour. I can recall one or two writing long narrative poems which were clever, and contained scurrilous references to the staff, or which were tragic and sentimental. I can recall one of the latter on the "Wreck of the Titanic," in which the writer, in declaiming her work, appeared

suddenly to see, and acted the scene with dramatic gestures, and an expression of horror. Unfortunately no record was kept of an informing series of such cases. Many women showed the absorption, inattention, facility, and suggestibility of the hysteric, others had gone a step farther in mental dissociation, and showed discrete, and easily recognized paranoid formations. Some were the subjects of auditory hallucinations, and of suspicions and delusions based on these. Some complained, when it was not the case, that their able and patient officers were against them, made charges against them, listened outside their cell doors, etc.

They would not work, sometimes for a day, or a week, and were very troublesome about wishing for continual changes of jobs. Some thought they could obtain no medicine and were ill in consequence; some that they had improper food and were losing flesh. These women could not be convinced by anything said to them, or by the evidence of the weighing machine. They thought they would die, and demanded release. Some refused their food, which was exceptionally good and plentiful, out of contrariety. Some apparently, at intervals, suffered from the anorexia which heralds or accompanies attacks of inebriety, and a few demanded drugs or alcohol when in this state. Some refused food by day, and ate it in the middle of the night. But, after discounting the suggestions given by their crav-



Passive type on the road to dementia



Hysteroid psychoses

ings for alcohol and other things, in reality systematized delusions were at the root of their resistant conduct.<sup>1</sup>

The litigious or querulent psychoses were to be seen in the State Inebriate Reformatory in their purest forms. My visit was usually the signal for complaints and requests of all kinds, and non-compliance with these, or reference of their case to the Governor or institution doctor, sometimes excited outbursts of argument, reproach, cursing or shouting, or sometimes a state of general resistance in which they would obey no one, and would do nothing, perhaps, for a fortnight on end. The state was apparently auto-suggestive, and always referred to their prison conditions. Their tempers and accusations were, as a rule, directed against their gaolers, and very seldom included their fellow inmates, to whom they were generally harmless. The unconscious motive was always desire to overthrow and destroy prison conditions, and desire for freedom. Whether manifested in Borstal, in State Inebriate Reformatory inmates,

<sup>1</sup> There are a number of cases of young men between the ages of 17 and 29 who are sentenced to penal servitude. These men are pronounced mentally sound on admission, but within a few years they develop delusions which necessitate their certification and removal to asylums. The whole series deserves careful study in order to ascertain the nature of their delusions, the connection of their condition with their depressing life in prison, and their subsequent state of mental health. These cases would form a more profitable study than the many cases whose pathological mental condition may have preceded their committal to prison, or of mentally defective or alcoholic subjects who may become insane under detention. (See the Prison Commissioners' Annual Lists of those Transferred to Asylums.)

or in convicts, I am disposed to think that the same conditions, loss of liberty, repression, and lack of interest in people of vigorous desires and neurotic constitution produced their state. Possibly, indeed probably, an unrecognized and untreated hysteria in earlier days had provided a *nidus* for the more fixed psychoses displayed by the older women.

The prison character of the psychoses was shown by the fact that if women who had been thus affected returned after their special long detention for shorter periods in local prisons, they did not display the same characters, but settled down to behave quietly and well.

The mental excitement of some of the Aylesbury inebriates was so great that they were certified as insane and sent to asylums, where they sometimes speedily recovered. I can remember one woman who after a term at Aylesbury was violent and troublesome in a local prison for some time, then had an attack of some sort, for which she was certified, and spent a year in an asylum, then came back into prison pleasant and well-behaved, and finally astonished us all, during the war, by keeping out of prison and working well. This woman appeared to go through every conceivable mental stage and condition during the 15 years I knew her.

The convict prison is no exception to what I have described up to this point. Excepting that the circumstances of the convict are harder, and

worse than those of any other prisoner, her lot under penal discipline is much the same. On the whole, the majority of the convicts with long sentences suffer from passivity, and they are, therefore, on the whole "good prisoners." Their knowledge that they have committed serious crimes, and by repeating them have brought their fate on themselves, appears to me partially to explain why they tolerate their detention under discipline better than the girls, in the early stages of their imprisonment. The late Duchess Adeline of Bedford, who knew them well individually, and was an acute observer, used to say that their average mental torpor was in her opinion phenomenal. She regarded them as having fitted into their life, and as being practically content with their lot. But that the phantasy system and unconscious wishes were neither dead nor sleeping, is shown by the minor prison punishments which among convicts are of considerable frequency, marking, with the persistence of conflict, the resistance of these prisoners to their fate.<sup>1</sup>

There were many recidivist convict women whose crimes were repeated, when the opportunity came to them, in a way which showed that their attitude and special tendencies could remain fixed, without variation, through long years. Some could not even change small habits, or orientate themselves to advancing age.

<sup>1</sup> See table chart, page 166.

One woman always celebrated her release from prison by dyeing her hair a brilliant peroxide gold. However it might have served her turn in her youth, at 75 years of age, over a white and wrinkled face, the effect was singularly horrible, and, although she was a good worker, only served to keep any human being from wishing to employ her.

*A.* spent the whole of her young and middle life in prison. When she was last in the convict prison she was called "feeble-minded." She was unamenable to discipline or orders, resistant, quarrelsome, and solitary. When free she was usually the catspaw of other clever gangs of criminals—a part frequently played by highly suggestible and reckless women.

*B.* was an "international" criminal, a treacherous, dangerous woman. She was tall and good-looking, and knew how to charm. She was a model prisoner, and worked hard like a machine, smiled all the time, and was perfectly mentally passive. She had served a long sentence in France, and served another here for inciting one man to murder another. On her discharge she went abroad again, and in a few months was arrested again on a similar charge. This woman's sadistic and homicidal wishes had remained untouched, if not actually preserved by her long term of penal discipline—about ten years.

*C.* was perhaps one of the most dreadful examples of the fixation of unconscious criminal

wishes. She had a passionate temper, and had committed six serious assaults on other people, which had obtained for her several years of imprisonment. She usually stabbed her victims with a knife. Her fifth offence brought her a sentence of five years' penal servitude. Her sixth ended in the death of her victim, and earned a capital sentence. This was reduced to a life-sentence, in her case really for life, as it was plainly unsafe to let her go. As her life drew on, she became more and more desirous of regaining her liberty, and suffered from occasional attacks of melancholia. On one occasion I found her in her cell too depressed to go to work. I said: "Why, C., what's the matter?" Turning tragic eyes on me she said, "I'm feeling dreadful. It's nineteen years to-day since I did it." I replied: "Oh, don't sit thinking, my dear. Can't you pull yourself together and come downstairs? You generally work so well."

"Tell me, Dr. Gordon," she said. "Is it likely that they will ever let me go?" I replied, "I don't know. I think, perhaps, some day, when you are too old to do any more harm, they *might* let you go. But you can't expect it now, can you? You know as well as I do you're not safe. Try and see how nice you can be to the others here." She replied to me with a gesture of despair. Fortunately, very soon death came, and closed her account with men, and we, who knew her, were glad of it.

No one will ever know the origin of the unconscious wishes, or the mechanism of the terrible impulses that beset this woman. We have not the comfort of being able to label her as of "criminal type," or to call her insane. Possibly we may once have had chances with her which we never took. And her passionate disposition which persisted through her nineteen years, until age and mental confusion began to dull it, may have been much more of our business than we made it. Her first crime may not have been our fault, but I do not feel so sure about her last.

It has been argued that "law breakers are not a special breed of human beings, differing qualitatively from those who keep the law." But if we manufacture, through our prison system, a criminal of whose crimes it can be predicted that, her unconscious desires having become fixed, she is exceedingly likely to carry them out again, is she not as formidable a phenomenon as the criminal of a qualitative order?

A few of the convict women with degenerative psychoses were in a very poor mental state. They would often save up a grievance to relate to me, brooding on it until they had every word of a long and circumstantial statement by heart. Yet when they had delivered it, they would forget what it was about, or what they really wanted to say, would be unable to discuss it, and would, in confusion, withdraw it. One thing

<sup>1</sup> Sir E. Ruggles-Brise, "The English Prison System," p. 202, par. 1.

they would seldom do, accept any explanation, reference to any rule, or any refusal of their petition from the Inspector. They were among those who had thrown their prison life away, and rules and orders no longer existed for them. Their only reality was their own changing, and unreasonable, or fantastic wishes and grievances, based on delusions of prison persecution.

It is plain that any woman whose mental equipment has come to this, will have great difficulty in taking up life again when she is once more a free woman, and will be practically incapable of a decision to refrain from crime. What, then, are the psychological laws which in our treatment of our criminals we ignore, and what is the process by which we stamp the prisoner as a recidivist?

To take our process first—it consists of too long and too severe confinement, a far too repressive discipline which gives the prisoner no room to move, or to exercise her powers, or instincts. We make no intelligent attempt to understand her difficulties or remove them.

The prisoner reacts to the stress we place her under, as all other people react to circumstances of the same kind. She suffers pain, she thrusts away the hated present, she phantasies another life instead of living in the painful present.

She compensates for her feelings of disgrace or defeat by unconscious self-justification. She blames circumstances, not herself, for what

has happened to her. She will "get even" with her misfortunes. She only managed badly. She will manage better next time. And when next time comes, she reacts to her fixed unconscious wishes, and repeats her crime. Penal discipline does not allow it to be otherwise.

At a later stage in older women, nervous manifestations, perverted attitude,<sup>1</sup> and deteriorated states of mind appear, which can be gauged by careful conversations. Later developments are shown by increasing instability and restlessness, the fresh crime *of the same nature* on discharge, the subsequent deeper involvement of the prisoner's mentality, the flaming of violent resistance to discipline, or else the passive response to the bare requisites of prison behaviour, the organized psychoses, the "prison" basis of the psychoses, and by the tendency to a more or less chronic condition of resistance to, or ignoring of prison life. Finally, she shows her inability on discharge to live without the crime, which, also, one may say, has become organized.

It may be argued that the severity of prison discipline which I regard as one exciting cause of crime, has undergone much modification of late years, and that there is a considerable desire, on the part of the public, to make prison conditions less harsh and more civilizing. The number of privileges allowed to prisoners is cited, and the

<sup>1</sup> Such a prisoner will describe how she did her crime with manifest pleasure.

Borstal Institution, in particular, is held up as a model institution in this respect.

It may, therefore, come as a surprise when I say that, in my opinion, if there is one thing more than another which has hindered the reform of our penal system, it is the sentimental philanthropic spirit which of late years has clouded the issue. This was well brought home to me not long ago when I was present at a meeting at which certain speakers related with pride how, and with what ameliorations, our system of preventive detention was carried out, and a speaker from America,<sup>1</sup> ignoring the whole of the details presented for our admiration, put in an impassioned plea against prisons. These speakers had absolutely no common point of view, although all engaged in handling the criminal. The speaker from America was intent on handling his man *without the prison*.

Our own public has felt uneasy, has felt (in the case of petty offenders quite unnecessarily) how hardly punishment was bearing on prisoners with whom they, "but for the grace of God," or even but for luck, might have been keeping company in their gaols.

We are, in this country, not really business-like, we have not the objection we should have to "throwing good money after bad," we are not willing to believe, after all the pains we know, or think, we have taken, that the formidable list

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Spencer Miller.

of the re-convicted has anything to do with our methods. We talk endlessly about proceeding step by step, and manage, withal, to cling to the bad elements of our old system, while adding small "reforms" and ameliorations as a salve to our consciences. The piano, concert, educational lecture, or other amusements and recreations, the newspaper—all these things and more, we bestow on our captive to enable her to bear our discipline better—to "lighten" the imprisonment. But the prisoner would tell you that if you really want to lighten her sentence, the way to do so is to let her out of her prison—then you "can have" your reformatory paraphernalia for your own use. These things are certainly not going to change the nature of her brooding which goes on all the year.

People have often said to me: "I have felt so anxious about what is done to prisoners. One hears dreadful reports about the prisons, but now one knows that they have all sorts of privileges, games, tobacco, and so on, I feel that we must be doing all we can for them."

It is difficult to begin, even, to tell these people that the bitter pill of penal discipline cannot be disguised in this minute quantity of jam, and that the recreations, if they saw them, might make them more inclined to cry than to rejoice. I have met many kindly souls who were anxious to come and do something to entertain and amuse prisoners, and who have been quite disappointed

at my lack of enthusiasm for their plan. I have often replied: "No, I don't want you to come and do things. I want for them things that they care to do for themselves, and can do. I have seen them sitting in rows listening, or not listening, while other people talked, for too many years to believe that more of that will cure them."

When we adopt the puerile view that "reformatory influences" of any such kind, or that systematic marks, stages, and rewards, or a kind, mild and even rule, or an evening's pleasure, or any other creation from *our* phantasies will serve our turn with our crushed but untameable man or woman, we only cover up the root causes of our failure. Nothing will serve us but to understand the laws that govern the prisoner's and our own psychology. As long as we give him no outlet, but foster in him those emotional states which lead to unreality and fresh crime, he will remain our manufactured article. He is as capable of taking the distractions we provide for his mind, or the food we provide for his soul, and weaving them into his criminal wishes, as the man Tolstoy tells of was capable of being fortified, by the beautiful Kreutzer Sonata, to do his murder.

<sup>1</sup> It is plain that in our system the primary object is punishment, and that reform is supposed to follow the acquirement of the passive and unmoral attitudes of obedience and attention to instruction. When "reformatory influences" are added one is irresistibly reminded of the advice given by Mr. Weller, Junior, for the treatment of a certain disturber of domestic peace: "I'd put him in the waterbutt and put the lid on, and if I found he was insensible to kindness I'd try the other persuasion."

It may appear that, so far, I have no good word to say for our prison system in any of its forms. I have not. I think it creates a criminal class, and directly fosters recidivism, that our method is dead and done with, and in need of decent cremation. From the ashes one hopes a system might arise which, if imbued with a really scientific spirit, might be a new beginning in tackling a problem which is, at present, all to solve. But the new can never be grafted on the old, and penal discipline must go.

## CHAPTER XIII

### A FEW COMPARISONS

Granted that we are obliged at times, in the public interest, to curtail an individual's liberty to commit offences or crimes, our responsibilities towards him become, *ipso facto*, very serious. The chances are that, in controlling him, we are going to injure him. Having provided that he is unable to hurt us, we must take all due care that we do not hurt him. To put it at its lowest, we do not want him as a recidivist.

If it can be shown that we do a man harm by our system of curtailing his liberty, if it is true that we more often than not cripple his energies, paralyse, or deflect his wholesome interests and natural instincts, render him listless, or defiant, or parasitic; distort his outlook, confirm his mistaken ideas, and create in him serious conflicts which end in the triumph of what is unconscious and uncontrolled over what is realized and directed, the question is how we are to control him in ways that will not lead to these evil results. How, in short, are we to balance the harm that must happen to us if we do not control him, and the harm that must happen to him if we do.

As time has passed, ameliorations in the conditions of prisoners have been accorded in most

civilized countries. But the fate of most of them remains cruel, and there exists still a widespread belief in their rigorous treatment under penal discipline. This belief is shared alike by the public and by the prisoner's gaolers. To the public, he is in need of punishment, and penal discipline sees that he gets it. To the gaolers, who are perhaps not so keen on his punishment, it is an easy way of controlling the prisoner. It makes the prisoner mechanical, automatic, passive. If he develops a psychosis, it is assumed that he is naturally weak-minded, or insane, and the system or the gaoler is not to be blamed for that.

It is difficult to speak of the methods of those peoples who subject their prisoners to long years of separate confinement, but it should be remembered that this treatment is much mitigated by permission to receive plenty of visitors and letters, by the personal attention of the prisoner's gaolers, and by the more interesting work that many are given to do. Prisoners under this system do not escape psychoses, especially of the paranoid variety, and some foreign writers have been led to think that the solitude was accountable for this, and report that they have not found it in mass—or, as we should say, "associated"—imprisonment, to nearly so great an extent. The mental state of prisoners under prolonged confinement in cells is also carefully watched, and, when necessary, they can be sent elsewhere for

treatment. On the whole, although I do not know that their results, as shown by recidivism are better than our own, neither does it appear that we should be justified in describing their methods as more inhuman than ours. The penal discipline is the common and malign feature of both methods.

By far the best and most practical system I have seen is that which exists in France. Although I saw examples of French imprisonment a few years before the war, and details that I describe may have been altered or modified, the system as a whole, presents the greatest differences from our own of any I have seen. All French prisons differ from ours in three important respects. They are far better and more expensively equipped; the food is much better and more varied; letters and visits are more freely permitted, private money may, to a certain extent, assist the prisoner, and wages are paid to prisoners. French prisoners are, therefore, in several important respects, under much less stress than ours, whose penal discipline includes a severe, unappetising, and uniform diet, a very limited amount of communication with friends at long intervals, and a general condition of reduction of material comforts to a minimum. Our prisons are also more crowded, prisoners are more closely herded, and space and room to be comfortable in, is much less generously provided. In all these ways the French system considers

certain important instincts and feelings, and allows them scope for satisfaction.

I pass over a description of the prison at St. Lazare which is the great remand, and clearing-house for women at Paris, and before coming to the long sentence prisoners, will describe the large modern *Maison Correctionnelle* at Fresnes. This prison is the equivalent of our Local Prison for persons with sentences of from one day to one year. The whole period of the sentence, whatever its length, is spent in separate confinement, and neither about the prison, at exercise, nor in chapel does any prisoner ever see the face of another. Masks are worn by prisoners when going about the prison. No domestic work is done by prisoners excepting the cleaning of their own cells.

The French prison authorities appear to believe that this system of complete separation, and concealment of the prisoner's identity, is not only deterrent, but has other advantages. There is no one there to keep the prisoner in countenance. No other offender recognizes her, or makes her acquaintance, no fraternity in crime or disorder is encouraged. The punishment, if severe and disgraceful, does not demoralize.

Again, under this system the prisoner is not pauperized. She has to pay a part of her way. She gets a small payment for piece-work, provided by a manufacturer who is her employer. She may have money of her own, or from friends,

to spend on herself. The prison authorities provide her with two inadequate meals, and three garments, stockings and sabots. But there is a large, well-stocked canteen like a big grocery and general store, from which she may supplement her diet and clothing. She can order an extra dinner-dish, or can buy such foods as cheese, jam, chocolate, sugar, sardines, or such clothing as flannels, slippers, and many other things. She may have a visit every week, and may send letters twice a week.

The cell in which she is confined is large and airy, with a window that can be opened well. It is well furnished with a good folding bedstead, and wool-and-hair mattress and good furniture, and cell cleaning utensils. Water is laid on, and electric light fixed. The walls are painted white, and the floor polished. The prisoner may have plentiful changes of under-clothing, and she and her cell are spotlessly clean.

Therefore, even the short-term prisoner is not punished by privations. She can eat well of what she likes, or of what suits her, can keep in touch with her friends, can earn a little money. The close confinement apparently does not plunge her into regressive phantasies, she is said to work and behave very well. As a severe punishment it appears to be as good, as logical, and as little damaging to the prisoner as any that I have seen. That is perhaps all that can be said for it, and France, too, has her recidivist problem.

The *Maison Centrale*, which corresponds to our Convict Prison, receives prisoners for from over one year, to life sentences. It is as different from ours as possible, hardly having a feature in common with it. The prison I saw of this description was roomy, well heated and well lighted, with nothing penal in its general aspect or arrangement. There were a few small rooms where prisoners could be kept if their behaviour was bad, but punishments or restraints seemed to be very few. There were large, comfortable dormitories, a dining-room, a large room for use on Sundays for writing letters, reading, etc. No prisoner was locked in any room alone, day or night, unless for some exceptionally bad behaviour. There was a fine large factory attached to the prison, which was managed by a manufacturer who employed, taught, and paid the women wages for their work. The women were employed 50 or 60 in one room, where, with power machines, they did beautiful and highly-skilled work. The standard of cleanliness and tidiness was very high, and the clothing of each woman cost double that of an English convict. First offenders were separated from other prisoners, otherwise there were few rules. Prisoners could order dishes from the prison canteen, and I saw them eating soup, hot sausages, and stewed prunes, and drinking wine. A woman could have what she could pay for. On any Sunday a prisoner could receive visitors or

could write letters. If one compares the life of our own Borstal girls or convicts with the life of inmates in this French convict prison, one wishes they had a few more of the French conditions. The French prisoner's life, if hard, is more human. When one sees the English convicts, young and old, herded in one especially dismal wing in a local prison, which is lighted only by skylights, and in which there is hardly space for all to assemble together, when one thinks of them locked in cells in this wing for about 16 hours out of 24, eating all their meals, for years, locked up alone, one wonders how they endure it. They live, eating nothing but measured quantities of tasteless, unvarying, and too fattening foods, marched to labour of the poorest kinds, taught no trade in a way that would get them good wages on discharge, kept as slaves at the expense of the nation, absorbed, passive, and uninterested. One envies those other women for them.

The French prisoner exercises many free choices. She can keep in good touch with her home, can send home money. She is far more in touch with the world than the Borstal girl, or English convict.

It is said that payment of wages would be impossible in this country, because trades unions and other collections of voters would object to it. Let us see how they manage to work it in France, where they also have voters who object.

To begin with, the prison authorities do not

carry on the manufacturing business. It is no concern at all of theirs. All they do is to guarantee to the manufacturer a certain number of hands who are to be found in the prison. They let him have the factory, but he fits it up, and provides all teaching and supervision. The prison simply polices his factory with one or two officers, but it is entirely managed by his own supervisors. The whole prison is planned so as to liberate the largest possible number of women to work for the manufacturer. Decrepit and useless prisoners are weeded out. A small number of prisoners, chiefly elderly or old, are employed and paid as servants to do the work of the prison. The number of officers employed is very small. Good machinery in kitchens and laundries simplifies and accelerates the domestic work.

Prisoners in the workshops can be reported and punished for idleness. They can earn from 8 centimes to 2 francs (pre-war prices) a day. The work done is piece-work, of varying degrees of skill. The prices are fixed at the current rates of the trade, and are regulated by the Chamber of Commerce, which, as it were, sees fair play. A small deduction from these prices, which neither harms nor benefits the trade, is allowed to the manufacturer in consideration of certain disadvantages he is at, in conducting his business in this particular place, where power may be expensive, or the locality remote from his

market, and also because he never gets the same amount of work from his prisoners as he does from his free labourers. Also as soon as they become efficient they may leave him, and he has had to import highly-paid teachers to instruct them. But the advantage to the tax-payers is undoubted, as the prisoner has to keep herself, and the cost of her detention is comparatively small.

The chief advantage to the manufacturer is that, as the supply of work-people is a fairly constant quantity, he can command enough skilled work to enable him to compete with other manufacturers who may be, in other respects, more favourably situated than he is. He can, with tolerable certainty, execute a large contract in a short time. Beyond this, he appears to have no advantages, and no exploitation of his work-people is possible.

There is no reason in the world why, because a man or woman is put under control, he or she should not continue to earn an honest living. There is no sort of reason why other people should pay for the support of prisoners. Apparently the French are not as fond of pauperising their less valuable citizens as the British are. The prisoner's earnings go towards the support of herself and family as a free woman's earnings might do.

It is urged that the prisoner has the advantage of regular work and wages. But she has it under

conditions to which no free person would submit. She happens to have been sent to this place where there is work. The manufacturer has come here because there are work-people to be had whom he would not otherwise have got in a small town. In his trade workpeople are difficult to get. Any person wanting work can go to his, or other, free workshops. The prisoner has no power to go. Society is only really injured if a prisoner, or any other person, is living as a slave and a parasite, in prison or out of it.

It is not evident how, in this country, the employment of prisoners on Government work is really any better for the tradesman who might have had the work, than the employment of the prisoner as if free.

The French prisoner is under certain beneficial stresses. She has to compete with others. She sees others getting more or less than herself, as she does in free life. She has to work for a master, and has to please him, and to come up to his standard. She gets a reward if she does extra well. She has to work at a real live trade, stick at it, and acquire skill and speed. This natural effort is of great value to her.

She is forced, like everyone else, to work to supply her personal needs. She leaves the prison with a genuine skilled and fairly paying trade, and with the offer of work, if she will take it, in her employer's free factory. She would surely not be found whining, as our convicts

often are, on discharge, that "they never had a chance," or be found, after years in prison, as utterly incapable of earning a living as some of ours are found to be.

The sluggish, uninspired, effortless, dependent life of the British convict, with its dreadful monotony, or the rigorous passage of the Borstal girl through punitive grade, and other grades, and possibly penal class, without the acquisition of real skill, or possibility of gauging her worth in terms of wages, cannot compare with the French system. Nor can the ill-lighted, comfortless convict prison, with its constant locking-up of prisoners in cells, compare with the fine buildings and the community life of the French. I am not desirous of praising the French system unduly. The work was rigorous. It had its repressive elements, and a severe discipline, but it was, for the prisoner, a life much more like life in the world, and it appeared to me far less likely that girls and women doing from two to three years' sentences here would become hysterical, psychotic, or severely mentally dissociated as a result of it. A convict who had served long terms in both French and English prisons, told me that the food alone made life in the French prison far easier to bear.

As regards other countries, habitual petty offenders in Belgium and Holland are sent to large colonies for terms of up to three years. The Colony at Veenhuisen, in Holland, is a very

suggestive example of what might be done in the way of controlling offenders who must be put under control. This colony is for men—there are a very small handful of women offenders in Holland. The colony is situated in a large tract of country in the North of Holland, and has a circumference of about 20 miles. It has three villages, each containing about 1,000 men. It has about 16 farms on which the more reliable men go to work. The less reliable or difficult work in workshops under supervision. The country is beautiful, and the work taught to the men is good and interesting. A large quantity of very good work is turned out for the State. Discipline is strict, and the fact that the countryside is intersected by canals makes escape difficult.

But the penal element is shown in the poverty of the prisoner's conditions, the poor clothing, poor and monotonous diet, supplemented, through scanty earnings of a few pence, by a canteen of a very limited description. If conditions are improved, there are great possibilities in such a place. But the discipline there, is, in effect, penal, and the men get no wages, but are State slaves like our own prisoners, obliged to work at State work.

In all foreign prisons that I have seen, there was a real attempt to diagnose mental illness, to sort and classify prisoners in different prisons, and to instruct and employ them usefully, and

aged, useless, eccentric, or sick prisoners were not kept with the able-bodied. This appeared to me to be one reason why work was better done, discipline was so easily maintained, and perhaps why foreign prisons were so much less strong, in most cases, than our own.

In a *Maison de Force* in France I saw the locked sleeping-boxes of men prisoners, with light wooden doors, freely ventilated, and with a window which opened freely. As in the *Maison Centrale* for women, there was no other locking-up.

In Holland 3,000 men were controlled without prison walls or buildings, although locked in cages, in large dormitories, at nights.

In America I have only seen a few places of detention, and among them were the best and the worst I have seen anywhere.

But the Sleighton Farm School for girls and young women is a model of what an educational establishment for young women could be if the "prison" element were taken out of it. I do not think discipline is absent from this institution by any means; I think there may be, in one sense, more than even we are accustomed to, but my impressions were rather casually gathered, and are not worth much. But I visited this place accidentally on a holiday, and saw several hundreds of girls giving a party to their friends, and amusing themselves. Boys from a neighbouring school had brought a band. There were field-sports, and exhibitions of cookery, and sweets

and needlework, and prizes for these, and a delightful procession in fancy dress took place in which the girls' fancies had free play. The tone of the institution was—well there *was* a tone and there were good manners, and there was spontaneous gaiety, and interested play.

All the girls were in pretty frocks, and the houses they lived in, and all else, bore more relation to a high class school in this country than to a reformatory. Again I envied the conditions for prisoners at home; there was so much that mitigated discipline, and that provided outlet, and conduced to development. They were prisoners—but could, and some did, go on from their place of detention to colleges and universities—places that I have known Borstal girls deeply interested in hearing about.

I remember a conversation I had with a Borstal girl on this topic. I told her about the big public schools for “ladies” and “gentlemen,” and what their ideas of honour were, and the kinds of things that they thought it wrong to do. She listened intently and said: “Is it *really* like that? I didn't know.” Remembering her own experiences of life, I said: “Of course, these are real gentlemen we are talking about; perhaps if you have known any, you have known the shams. Money doesn't make a gentleman.” She said: “I know; *we* don't know the real ones.”

If I had been able to tell her that she could go on to higher education, and have all the

possibilities that were before the American girls I had seen—well—perhaps she would not have been the naughty little girl she was, in her prison.

In America, too, I gather that penal discipline is still believed in to a large extent, but America has much to teach us regarding the spirit in which to approach our problems. She is not ashamed to be enthusiastic, nor to learn by her mistakes. She acts quickly, and throws away measures that do not prove useful without wasting time on them. She is ready to spend generously, and she makes her mistakes under a fire of public criticism which is unknown in England. She is ready to call-in all kinds of experts to assist her over her prison and other problems. Her difficulties with her big foreign and criminal population, compared with ours are immense. But she hopes on, hopes ever, and “arrives” more often than we have any idea of, or do ourselves.

## CHAPTER XIV

### BASES OF REFORM

If it appears to us true that our system of penal discipline is a failure, and even something more; that ordinary short terms of imprisonment fail to impress, punish, or deter the vast majority of petty offenders; that the Borstal System owing to the preponderance of penal discipline punishes heavily, but shows no conspicuously good results; that penal servitude only sets a seal on our mistakes in dealing with the prisoner, what, to be practical, are we to substitute?

Certainly no ready-made System will serve our turn. We need, in the first place, the substitution of one principle of treatment for another.

Society has a right to define offences and to require its members not to commit them, and control must assuredly enter into the treatment of offenders. The only conceivable alternative to penal discipline is sufficient control to prevent offences, combined with scientific treatment of the prisoner's symptoms, that is, of his crime.

His symptoms are to be found rooted in the emotional and mental sphere, and must be met on that ground. Treatment must be founded on the psychology, attitude, and whole condition of the

prisoner, and we must recognize that we cannot control his anti-social activities, unless we afford him as full opportunities as can possibly be arranged, for the exercise of those free choices which alone can preserve him as a sane, free man. Our control should provide that he is not shielded from natural consequences from which he can learn, nor prevented from acquiring anything lawful that is of value to him, nor punished under detention with petty punishments. If it is true that one half of the world does not know how the other half of the world lives, it is also true that one half does not know how the other half gets punished, and takes that punishment. In our large cities where uncivilized hordes get into more or less organized sub-groups, it is important that the education of all should include information as to what is against the law, and why. It should be made clear to each developing citizen that, if he offends, it is not the policeman who pounces on him, nor the magistrate who punishes him, who is most concerned with him, but that it is his fellow-creatures who cannot put up with his conduct, and who have decreed his control. The creation of prejudice in favour of certain lines of conduct, and against certain others, hinders the lives of none, and where it is well done, serves to pool group-ideas and to strengthen the moral findings of the major herd.

A part of this education might be had for the adult population from the spectacle of the

administration of justice itself, which might be as fine an object lesson, as it is now, often a very poor one. Justice, in our smaller courts, is so swiftly and unobtrusively done, that sometimes even your next door neighbour may not know the truth about your absence last week, or last year, or yesterday when you paid your fine. However small the offence, justice should be done, not in a small, undignified ill-lighted room, and in such a way that the proceedings are hardly heard by the small audience personally interested in the case. It should have a better setting, access to the court should be easy, and every case should receive, as the highly important act of a highly important human being, more scrutiny and more comment than is now usual. A dignified public admonishment of the offender should leave the audience in no doubt as to the social offensiveness of the deed committed. No matter how small the offence, the accused person should always be offered skilled defence. Justice should be "satisfied" from the point of view of both the prisoner, and the public.

In a men's convict prison (*Maison de Force*) in France, I saw a room arranged like a small court of justice, with benches for an audience. I was told that prisoners were always tried for prison offences in the presence of other prisoners, since it familiarised them with the rules of good behaviour, and was a safeguard to justice.

A silent jury of fellow-creatures at any such

inquiry, in prison or out of it, appears to me to be equally of advantage to all concerned.

It is certain that, in our courts, accused persons often get a sympathetic hearing, that their difficulties are considered, and that justice is tempered with much mercy. Our magistrates and judges do now frequently use such alternative means as are at their disposal, before committing a convicted person to prison. They resort, whenever they can, to the imposition of parole, probation, recognizances, sureties, to adjournments *sine die*, or call voluntary agencies to the prisoner's aid. They are, of course, backed by the alternative modes of punishment in their power. Unfortunately, the alternative in the background does not amount to much, and the prisoner does not fear it, as prisoners generally fear what I have called the "smart" punishment of, say, six or twelve months. If the alternative were one that he really did fear, the prisoner would probably be more ready to keep any agreement made by himself with justice.

The deferred sentence appears to me to be one of the best methods by which offenders could be controlled. Under such a method the prisoner would understand, when it is the case, that he is convicted, and that therefore whenever the community chooses it can take away his liberty. He should understand that he owes the community something which it intends to get from him, but that, if he pays something on

account his bill will be allowed to run. In short, he should be convicted but not deprived of his liberty unless it is found absolutely necessary. The sentence should continue to be valid all his life or for a number of years, and meantime, whether it is executed or not, he should have to do something as a guarantee of good behaviour for a certain period.

That something should never be done with other people's money. This is the great objection to our system of fines, which are often obtained by contributions, by dishonest compacts, by borrowing, by visits to the pawnshop, or at the expense of the family food, or the rent collector. The form of control should be one that assists the prisoner in managing his life. Numerous ways could probably be devised, such as parole, probation on a really well organized and effective scale, orders to report to the court, to remain at work, to make reparation, to have accounts audited, and so on, to be under supervision. His mates, his relatives, his church, his club, might be invited to influence or look after him. Under some such pressure—open and public, or quietly done, as the case might warrant—the individual choice of “a life without the law” might much less easily be made than under conditions in which a man is plucked by the police from his group or circle, punished, and then goes straight back in the atmosphere in which he is likely to offend again.

If control were to be effected on any such principle, it would be absolutely necessary to reckon up each individual at an early date, by a thorough examination of his physical and mental state, in order to determine before the account has run far, whether it would be expedient to let his conviction stand over any longer, or not.

I believe if we had, in conjunction with a scheme of control, a scientific clearing and sorting house for convicted persons, with proper places of treatment provided in connection with it, that the doctor's work would soon become all-important, and the gaoler, as we know him, be out of work. If the thousands of petty offenders, on whom we now throw away time and money, proved largely and sufficiently controllable by other means, our places of detention might not be complicated or costly.

In all serious crimes, especially those of an impulsive or deeply perverted nature, the prisoner should come to his trial bringing his *dossier* with him, so that he can be dealt with according to the findings of the skilled psychiatrists who have taken his measure, and understood the treatment of his neurosis. These experts should be made entirely responsible for the disposal of the criminal, or insane, or inebriate group, whose liberty may be forfeit, and should keep all records, and make all examinations that may be necessary for the due care and treatment of the prisoner.

When the young have been sent to schools, gymnasia, or other places of education, or to places of work, when the genuinely feeble-minded, the poor old men and women, and the large class of psychotic individuals have all been duly allocated to their right places, the treatment of the worst, and most needy criminal cases will have some chance of success.

To approach the problem by such a route would be reasonable, humane, and scientific, and much more hopeful for the cure of many. We are always trying to approach the problem in this way, and often speak as if, and perhaps believe, we are doing it. We fail for want of thought, courage, and organization, and because, let our dreams for improving our present scheme be what they may, we fall headlong over penal discipline at every step.

When I visited New York and other American cities two years ago, I was surprised at the number of students of psychiatry whom I met among medical colleagues, and others. At first I wondered what they all found to do. But I soon discovered that there was any amount of work for them, and that they were doing it. In one institution after another, full and complete *dossiers* of the individual's whole history, condition, and treatment were handed to me. One could learn of investigations made as to individuals, not once, but over and over again, improvement, or deterioration being noted. In

a handful of American institutions most of our prisoners could have been scientifically treated. I envied the record-keeping I saw.

The practice in America of reckoning up individuals and measuring their capacities, was not confined to delinquents and criminals, but was used in colleges, and industrial establishments, and other places in which the information could be usefully applied. There was no question whatever of the science and solidity of the work done.

Of course, if any serious work is being done in any institution, nobody wants people who belong to wholly different clinical categories segregated together in a manner which makes steady treatment of any impossible. This was well realized in those foreign prisons I have seen, which are laid out for industrial work. Only those prisoners who could do the kinds of work provided were kept together in one place. As far as I know, we are the only people who treat the criminal, feeble-minded, drunken, the early dement, the paranoiac, the senile, the crippled, and the young offender under one penal discipline.

It is, of course, possible that British men and women are inherently more violent, determined, obstinate, and difficult to control than the people of other nations. I have certainly thought so, when I have seen young or older persons in 'America and Holland controlled without walls

and fences. There must be some explanation why our general prison buildings and special places of control within them, are so much stronger than those of other countries. Possibly one reason may be that our people are among the worst drinkers, and therefore the most mentally unstable and excitable. But the superior sobriety and domestic virtues of the women of other nations, and the fact that all the men learn some discipline in their military training, may account for their being apparently more easily handled. When abroad I saw a cell lined with light matchwood which was used for confining violent prisoners. I thought how easily some of the women I knew would kick it to smithereens. Indeed, my remarks as to the very light hand that French prisoners seemed to be under, drew the reply that our punishments in England seemed to be terrible. They had had a man there whom we had flogged in England and—"if you had seen his back——!" It was bitter to hear such criticism in another country, and to have absolutely no excuse to offer for that back, with our cruelty and ignorance scored upon it. No doubt force is employed too often as a solution of prison difficulties; but it remains a fact that the French criminal sleeps in a block with open window, and in a lightly-divided box, with an easily-broken light wooden door, while the English feeble old woman is double-locked in a cell with an iron door, and walls strong enough

to baffle a Baron Trench. It may be that our unconscious fear of the people whom we treat by penal discipline is reflected in our brick and cement erections for holding them.

A suitable institution or place for the control of those whose liberty must be taken from them, should allow as much freedom of life as it is possible to give the prisoner, provided that he earns his living, and abstains from disorder or crime. For this reason I believe that a large colony, like that at Veenhuisen, affords the best method of detention that could be devised. The large area of this colony enables plenty of varying industries to be established, and within it establishments of various kinds could be maintained.

As Inspector, it has been my duty to confirm to the prisoner, on many occasions, when she wanted to write an unreasonable number of special letters, or have an unreasonable number of special visits, that she could not be allowed to conduct her business from the prison. Yet what could be better than allowing a person under control to earn his or her living by conducting business from their place of control, if they find themselves able to do so? It would be easy to suggest instances in which this would be impossible, but in practice it might prove far from impossible. But I am not here concerned in elaborating a new system. If we could over-

come our inertia, and find a new road, penal discipline as a principle of punishment would probably give itself its own *coup de grace*.

There is one other point which I think may serve to enforce my argument : we may profitably envisage the relations of the prisoner to his doctor under the present system, and under a new method of control. The prison doctor holds a position that is practically unique. He is only responsible to his official superiors officially, and he is not fully responsible to his controlling medical bodies professionally, since his official position requires him to do to the prisoner what his professional position could not possibly allow him to do to a free, sane man, or to a man under forms of control other than penal discipline.

Let us see how his position differs from that of the ordinary doctor. The relation of doctor and patient are founded on absolute freedom on both sides. There is free choice of doctor by patient, and patient by doctor. The relation is also founded on confidence, given and respected, and on advice and help given and taken. A doctor could as little enter into honourable and useful relations with his patient, as could a lawyer, or priest, unless confidence were respected.

In the course of his work the doctor does not only receive confidences ; he sometimes, by reason of his professional knowledge, becomes aware of

secrets that have not been confided to him. In no case is he bound on account of what he knows, to punish, betray, or play the detective. If he accepts the patient at all, that patient's safety, honour, and welfare are in his hands. He may form such an unfavourable opinion of the patient's character or conduct that he prefers not to attend him at all, but if he accepts him as a patient, he must do his best for him. Rules of medical ethics are all made in the interest of the patient, and for the honour of the profession; a patient does not need to know, or regard them.

Every sane adult person can do as he likes with his own health. If he tries to commit suicide he must either succeed or run the risk of being punished—for failing—but otherwise he may be ill and die, may choose to die unrelieved or untreated, without calling a doctor to his assistance at all.

The only persons who would be regarded as without full powers of choice, are children, the partly or wholly unconscious, the badly injured, and those who appear to be mentally afflicted.

In other public services disciplinary conditions are accepted with the services.

Let us look at the position of the prisoner-patient under penal discipline. As he is a sane man still, in some respects he does retain certain personal choices. But he does not retain all, and it is not infrequently argued that his

rights are the same as those of the insane man. But they are not the same. The one man has little or no power to choose. The other, prisoner or no, has. He may, of course, be driven by a stress of choices to make the final choice of the Mayor of Cork. If he does, *he* triumphs—not discipline, nor the doctor. But short of this, the prisoner has no right to his own confidences or secrets. The doctor may take them away from him, and may give them to the Governor of the Prison, the police, the court. The prisoner does not consult the doctor, the State pays the doctor, and consults him about the prisoner.

As regards the doctor's official position, by virtue of his office, if he is in the prison service, he is a constable as well as a doctor. He is endowed with very special powers over the patient's life. He is one, and a very important one, of his gaolers. He decides upon his fitness for work, fitness for dietary punishment, fitness for restraint. If corporal punishment is awarded he certifies the prisoner fit, supervises the punishment, and can stay it. He forcibly feeds the prisoner to prevent his determining his imprisonment, stops when he thinks he has done as much as he dare, carries out the "cat and mouse" regulation. He is there when the prisoner is hanged.

None of these disciplinary or penal events would ever be carried out at all, except under his ægis, and, but for his help, this part of penal

discipline would absolutely disappear. If it is argued that he is there on the prisoner's behalf to see that he is as little injured as possible, nevertheless, he is the person who makes what happens possible. His is, therefore, very much the heaviest hand over the prisoner in the affair of penal discipline.

He has a limited relationship *qua* doctor, with prisoners at times when they might most benefit by his help, because he exchanges it for that of punishing official. If we can, however, see him under a new scheme of control, where penal discipline is not, where his hand is free, and he is not controlled officially, and where he has been liberated to give of his best to his sick men and women, and to the salving of the mental wreckage cast up at his feet, he will again be a presiding force, but a force this time on the side of the sick. He will represent us, the keepers of our brothers, in a very new way. Let us think of ourselves with this healer as our right-hand man.

Here is our boy or girl, anti-social, and of criminal habit, at the age of 16, and unfit to live at large uncontrolled. What is the condition, attitude, and degree of mental health of this almost child? Are we going to thrust him, or her, through the crippling mill of penal discipline, or are we going to take the way that will make a whole man or woman, with the help of a specialist?

What about this "fair terror" of a drunken, dissolute woman? What is her state of mind, attitude towards her world—interest in reality? Is shutting her up in prison with *herself* going to heal her? We want our doctor to study and unravel her problem.

What of the woman who has murdered her child because there is a man who does not want the child? Are we to shut her up for 16 hours a day, for an indefinite number of years, with nothing to think of except how badly she managed that she was found out, and how much less of a fool she will be next time—built on *this* time? Or shall we give her the doctor or educator who can show her where she is, and bring her to herself?

What of this wholesale poisoner, quiet and good man that he seems when we have him under control? Are we going to try to deliver him from the terrible, devilish, and destructive phantasies that have taken possession of him? Shall we free from his madness this man who is no more a born criminal than any one of us? Or is our only resource really to lead him to the execution room, and break his neck? What if we do? Will he not still be spiritually triumphant over us, and our penalty, and have gone away unchanged—wherever he has gone? And will our hanging of twenty such affect the unconscious mind of the man in the same, or another, town who is a victim of the same conflicts and

exploding instinctive impulses as the man we have just killed and buried?<sup>1</sup>

Do *we* never consciously or unconsciously wish for luxury, wish to escape from pain, desire oblivion, seek refuge from reality, wish for another's death, and would punishment change *our* fancies?

This is the question for us who make the laws that punish. For our answer let us not look to such means as the imposition of hours of solitude, hunger and deprivation, and repression, to severe rule and continual punishment, to making of our criminal a maimed, inert, or over-excited slave. Let us rather hand him over, not to the hangman,

<sup>1</sup> Let us go to the prison and talk with a prisoner who has been convicted of a serious offence against the person. We find a man of apparently ordinary intelligence, who answers our questions fully, and in every way acts like anyone else. Surely he should be punished as a warning to others! Let us question him a little further, let us submit him to a systematic mental examination. What do we find? We find him struggling desperately, trying over and over again to acquit himself creditably in answer to our very simple questions. A simple story is told him and he is asked to repeat it—not word for word, but merely give the sense of it, tell what it was about. He tries as hard as he can. He asks that the story be repeated, once, twice, and finally acknowledges that he cannot do it. He simply does not know how to use his mind, he cannot fix his attention on the thread of the narration, he does not know how to grasp the essentials and lay aside the unessential. He not only does not know how to use his mind, but he probably never knew he had a mind before the examination, even if he knows it now. He has lived a life of instinct, of passion, of needs, desires, wants, wishes, feelings, not of intellect. And his crime was a crime of passion—a crime of blind fury. He hardly knows now what he really did, except, perhaps as he has heard it detailed on the witness stand. What are your ideas now of this creature's responsibility? I can hardly call him a man, for he lives in a world so simple, so crude, so primitive, that we are at a loss to understand it. Shall we take him out of his cell in the morning and hang him? Yes, if you will. But don't do it under any delusion. Don't think you are helping to solve the problem of the criminal. Don't think even for one moment that you are setting a wholesome example.—*William A. White. Introduction to the "History of the Prison Psychoses," Nitsche and Wilmans. Trans: Barns and Gluck.*

but to the doctor, to the man of science, to the student of the whole man, to the educator, to the man who knows himself in so far as human knowledge will allow of it, to the man who can bring the most of human knowledge, human resource, and human feeling to bear on the problem, which we—have utterly failed to solve.



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